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Re-conceptualizing southern rhetoric: a meta-critical perspective

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THE RE-CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOUTHERN RHETORIC: A META-CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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For Allen

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Abstract

The study of southern rhetoric and public address remains important to the study of American rhetoric and public address. However, recent years indicate a decline in the amount and variety of scholarship in this area of study. This project provides a meta-critical analysis of the history of southern rhetorical scholarship, focusing mainly on southern public address. By tracing ideology from the Agrarians, Richard Weaver, Dallas Dickey, Waldo Braden, Stephen Smith, and Stuart Towns, clear attitudes and definitions of the South, southern identity and southern rhetoric evolved to create an area of study in much need of revision.

The remainder of the project suggests theoretical approaches such as Maurice Charland's use of constitutive rhetoric and Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody as just a sample of possible ways southern rhetorical studies may be further developed. These theoretical views are used in light of three case studies a grassroots organization known as the League of the South, a southern politician Senator Zell Miller's speech at the 2004 Republican National Convention, and a 1919 African American education activist Charlotte Hawkins Brown. These case studies show the need for re-conceptualizing southern rhetoric and re-evaluating the limited canon now facing southern public address.

Chapter 1.

Introduction: A Dilemma in Southern Rhetorical Studies

> But having incorporated the Cavalier as a fact in your charming little books I shall let him work out his own salvation, as he has always done with engaging gallantry, and we will hold no controversy as to his merits. Why should we?
>
> --Henry W. Grady
> "The New South," 1886[1]

> One-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. No enterprise seeking the material, civil, or moral welfare of this section can disregard this element of our population and reach the highest success.
>
> -- Booker T. Washington
> Speech at the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition, 1895[2]

On December 21, 1886 Henry Grady addressed the New England Society in New York City and claimed a "New South" had arrived. Advocating financial investment and business development, Grady dreamed of a South with economic prosperity and unified purpose. On September 18, 1895 Booker T. Washington spoke at the Atlanta Exposition Center. He too dreamed of a "New South." Washington's South prospered for both blacks and whites unifying the races in this effort. Both speeches, delivered after the final days of Reconstruction, testify to the influence of southern public address on the culture and politics at the time. Contemporary southern public address plays a similar role in our nation's development, and yet while southern rhetorical scholars have analyzed both Grady and Washington, many contemporary southerners have been ignored as *southerners*. This neglect, both methodological and canonical, is the focus of my study.

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[1] Joel Chandler Harris, *Henry W. Grady: His Life, Writings, and Speeches* (New York: Cassell Publishing Co., 1890), 15-16.

[2] Booker T. Washington, "Speech at the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition" found at http://www.edchange.org/multcultural/speeches/booker_atlanta.html. Accessed June 8, 2005.

1.1 Concerns for Southern Rhetoric

While the study of southern oratory requires us to analyze southern speakers, it also demands that we analyze speakers as southerners. The obvious place for this to take place would be a southern regional journal. In recent years the amount of scholarly attention on southern rhetoric has declined. *The Southern Communication Journal*, once the herald of southern rhetoric, today rarely posts a title with southern rhetorical topic matter. A number of reasons explain the lack of attention: the "demise" of southern culture, a decrease in the teaching of southern rhetoric in communication studies departments, and even the belief that 'southern oratory' is no longer significant.[3] Regardless of these speculations, looking into the current status of public address affords one with understanding into the shortcomings of past research and directions for future endeavors. Rhetorical studies ignores the study of southern rhetoric, ironically, despite the renaissance and growth of public address scholarship. As a result southern rhetoric only minimally experiences the re-theorizing that results from the fruitful challenges that grew out of collecting new case studies for the public address canon, and it extensively suffers from stereotypes developed at the onset of southern public address studies. Because the area of southern rhetoric was little impacted by the public address renaissance, southern rhetorical studies remain stilted and under-developed in light of the new methodologies and theories that developed in recent years.

[3] For more discussion on the Southern cultural demise see V. William Balthrop, "Culture, Myth, and Ideology as Public Argument: An Interpretation of the Ascent and Demise of 'Southern Culture'," *Communication Monographs* 51 (1984): 339-352; Peter Applebome, *Dixie Rising: How the South is Shaping American Values, Politics, and Culture* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1996); and John Egerton, *The Americanization of Dixie: The Southernization of America* (New York: Harper's Magazine P., 1974).

In an effort to re-conceptualize southern rhetoric for contemporary times as well as provide theoretical and methodological variety suitable for post-renaissance public address, I propose analyzing contemporary southern rhetoric and public address as "postsouthern." The term postsouthern appears in southern literature by critic Lewis Simpson who uses it to describe the state of the South after the changes brought about from historical events after the Civil War when the hierarchal paternalistic structure of the Old South slowly started to erode. The result in the 1920s and 1930s was a charge to end describing and discussing the South as the old system, like the Old South. The move into the postsouth slowly took place over almost a hundred years after the Civil War. For southern writers the South now represented a southern society which was "'no longer pious or respectful of tradition,' no longer affording the southern writer a context in the wholeness of existence."[4] The postsouth encompasses the complexities of southern culture and identity at a time when both context and meaning remain fluid. The concept of a postsouth addresses the problem of trying to specify the definition and meaning of southern when there is no longer one perceived South. Southern literature and southern history constantly remind scholars that there exist multiple Souths. Many times the race, gender, and class of the speaker give insight into which South we envision at a particular time. W. J. Cash's *The Mind of the South* seems rather one-sided in light of the *minds* of the *Souths* that the postsouth presents.

The postsouth is not without its difficulties. Literary critic Michael Kreyling points out that the postsouth time brings to light many of the problems associated with talking about the South -- the very term "southern" must be questioned for the ideologies

[4] Lewis Simpson, *The Brazen Face of History: Studies in the Literary Consciousness in America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1980), 260-261.

and interests attached to the word greatly affects how one evaluates southern culture. The use of the term "South" is used so much and is "invested with so much meaning, that we can no longer distinguish between what if anything is inherent and what other interests have attached over time."[5] The postsouth represents a fluid, ever-changing South dependent on context and historical meanings which must be deconstructed to understand what authority and what events lie at the foundations of its culture.

For those who want to view southern culture as a unified whole a discussion of the postsouth may prove disturbing. However, for those of us needing to evaluate southern rhetoric through a variety of views with multiple voices postsouth as a conceptual category is freeing. Consequently, it allows for marginal voices and ideas not yet appearing in the southern public address canon. A postsouth view requires an interrogation of the systems in which entities labeled "southern" come to mean such. By advocating the postsouth, I propose not to re-define southern rhetoric, but instead to re-conceptualize the way in which it is evaluated, analyzed, and considered.

1.2 Justification and Rationale

The very task of reconceptualizing southern rhetoric necessitates explaining why southern rhetorical scholarship requires such changes. Four reasons justify this particular study on the history of southern rhetoric: 1) the need for a better understanding of southern identity as it affects southern rhetoric, 2) the rise of southern political influence, 3) the need for understanding of historical layering and meaning in present southern culture, and 4) the importance of looking at the history of rhetorical studies. In looking at each of these reasons one sees the obvious need for further study in the connection between southern identity and southern rhetoric.

[5] Michael Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1998), 155.

First, southern identity remains an ambiguous and amorphous phenomenon. Many scholars have attempted to analyze and identify the various aspects involved in southern identity. Using everything from literary studies to public opinion polls, scholars in history, social science, and English evaluate what it means to be southern, each coming up with a slightly different version.[6] My study proposes to add to both the academic and cultural discussion surrounding southern identity by analyzing southern rhetoric first as an area of academic study and then as a practice.

To accomplish the goal of evaluating the various meanings of "southern," I introduce the concept of the postsouth. Current methods in southern public address and rhetorical studies still focus heavily on myth analysis and neo-Aristotelian analysis which assumes a singular construct of both southern identity and southern rhetoric. Such a perspective greatly narrows the discussion on southern public address as well as encouraging a canon out of step with influences on southern culture. An examination through a postsouthern view challenges many of these assumptions left over from a pre-public address renaissance.

Second, the need for re-evaluating discourse of the south becomes especially crucial as the South ascends to a place of prominence on the political scene. Southern politics sparked much discussion over the last few years. Most recently Texan George W. Bush capitalized on the folksy, good ole boy persona to win a second term as president. Southerner and Vice Presidential candidate John Edwards also made a significant political presence in the 2004 elections. The 1990s were filled with the

[6] For more information on southern identity from these three disciplines see John Shelton Reed, *The Enduring South: Subcultural Persistence in Mass Society* (Chapel Hill: U North Carolina P, 1986)*;* David Goldfield, *Black, White, and Southern: Race Relations and Southern Culture 1940 to the Present* (Baton

political involvement of southern politicians on the national scene. Within the last twenty-five years one half of all United States Presidents have been from the South. Most recently, in the early to mid-nineties, America elected "sons of the South" to the highest offices in the country, and a resident of Cobb County Georgia became the Speaker of the House of Representatives.[7] Indeed, political scientists give much attention to the influence of the South on national politics, including a possible "southern strategy" that began in the Nixon administration.[8]

Third, while the regional influence of the South grows in political implications, southern culture confronts a long history of stereotypes and racism. Recent events over the last decade illustrate a layering of historical meanings and events at odds with each other. During the 1996 Olympic Games, as Atlanta prepared to show the world that the South had indeed recovered from its racist and impoverished past, the Confederate battle emblem on the state's flag threatened to dampen that message, thus illustrating once again how historical times and present day constantly collide in southern culture. Recently journalists and scholars maintain school re-segregation is a particularly southern problem. The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University reports that schools in the South (as well as other parts of America) are returning to segregated school systems – sending this generation of southerners back to battles fought by previous ones.[9] Because contemporary southern rhetoric plays a role in all these political events, the study of such

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Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); and Louis D. Rubin, Jr., *A Gallery of Southerners* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

[7] Recently, Mississippi Senator Trent Lott endured Republican rebukes of his pro-Dixiecrat sentiments expressed at Senator Strom Thurmond's birthday party. See Howard Finemman, "Trent Lott's Perfect Storm," *Newsweek*, December 23, 2002, p. 22.

[8] Earl Black and Merle Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[9] Gary Orfield and Susan Eaton, "Back to Segregation," *The Nation*, March 3, 2003, http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/articles/reseg/php. Accessed March 12, 2003.

rhetoric not only helps us understand why issues of politics and race associated with the South continue to surface, but also how southern rhetoric can appeal to a nation at large and speak simultaneously to both American and southern cultures. While many speakers are recognized as being African American, women, presidential, poor, Appalachian, or of a particular social movement, rarely are these same speakers analyzed in accordance with their southern culture or background. The southern identity, along side other labels of identity, makes up the very richness of culture that affects and influences the rhetoric. Yet, while we may be aware of the influence the South has on politics, little has been done to capture or analyze the rich tapestry that makes up the relationship between southern culture and southern rhetoric. Therefore, the understanding of southern identity is essential to this study.

Finally, I wish for this study to add to our knowledge of the history of rhetoric as an academic discipline. As rhetoricians we study history to garner knowledge and insight about our "text" or "artifact." It is with little wonder, then, that at times we must turn our rhetorical, historical, critical, and theoretical eyes on ourselves. David Zarefsky articulates the importance of such studies:

> There is little question that this effort [studying the history of rhetoric] is important, because it traces the development of our theories and concepts. . . . [E]xamining the development of rhetoric in the context of the eras and societies in which it evolved is of obvious importance to understanding the current state of our knowledge and our discipline.[10]

The need for such meta-critical evaluation is great as rhetoric continues to establish itself as an important discipline in academia. My study of southern rhetoric will review an area that has yet to undergo a comprehensive critique. In doing so, this study will begin to

[10] David Zarefsky, "Four Senses of Rhetorical History," in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases,* ed. Kathleen Turner, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998).

revitalize an important area of rhetorical study, taking the first steps to preventing the extinction of southern public address. While Zarefsky makes a clear argument for studying the history of rhetoric and public address, the question of *southern* rhetoric is another issue to consider.

1.3 Literature Review

A thorough understanding of the various aspects of southern rhetoric requires an examination and study of the history of southern public address scholarship. Southern rhetorical scholarship enjoys a long tradition in the discipline of rhetorical studies. Southern speakers and the analysis of them first developed as a basic part of American public address scholarship. As time went on, however, a clear distinction and regionalism developed separating southern oratory, public address, and rhetoric into a category that remained a part of American public address and yet also separate from it. Several groupings of southern rhetorical scholarship may be made in an effort to both acknowledge the tradition, while also accentuating the areas in need of further study.

In looking over the various examples of research done in the area of southern rhetoric a few clear groupings represent the work in the field. This is not an exhaustive bibliography; such work began with listings by Braden and Mixon and later Eubanks, Towns, and Roberts. These listings primarily focus on scholarship appearing in journals within the speech communication discipline, while from time to time publications in historical or literary journals surface they tend to discuss speeches from the perspective of their various areas. This project focuses on the direction of speech communication scholarship in the area of southern public address and, therefore, so do the works in the following discussion. In looking at southern rhetorical scholarship several key groupings

surface: 1) studies on southern myths, 2) studies of the "great speaker" genre, 3) studies on pulpit oratory, and 4) rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement. A quick summary of these works illustrates the need for further research under a more broadened definition of southern rhetoric and adjustment to the southern rhetorical canon.

1.3.1 Southern Myths

Southern rhetorical studies have led many to questions regarding the mythical associations with southern culture. For example, Dallas Dickey's "Were they Ephemeral and Florid?" and Waldo Braden's study on "The Emergence of Southern Oratory" both attempted to correct myths and stereotypes associated with southern culture.[11] Unfortunately, in their attempts to correct these myths, Dickey and Braden reified them, making them part of a persisting academic and popular mythology of southern oratory that exists today. Dickey and Braden first began looking at southern oratory by questioning the perceptions other fields such as history and English held on the subject.

Two types of myths affected the study of southern rhetoric. The first was a stereotype of southern orators that became exaggerated and reified. The Southern demagogue became a universal typecast for southern speakers in general and all southern orators were stereotyped as ephemeral and florid. Ironically, this archetype originated with the defensiveness of several scholars and became elevated to the stature of myth along with other myths associated with southern oratory.

In contrast to the archetype of the Southern demagogue, the second type of myth associated with southern rhetoric survives in a broader form. The myths of the South, common generalizations such as "southern belle" and "good ole boy," cause even greater

[11] Dallas Dickey, "Were They Ephemeral and Florid?" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 32 (1946): 16-20;

consternation for rhetorical scholars analyzing southern culture. These myths threaten to define southern culture in caricatures and exaggerations brought on by literature and the media.

After the work of Dallas Dickey, Waldo Braden as well as other scholars continued to look into broader myths about the South. Stephen Smith's book *Myth Media and the Southern Mind* analyzes southern myth in media as well as rhetoric. Howard Dorgan analyzes the myth associated with the Confederate Veterans and the Lost Cause and William Strickland discussed James Vardaman's use of southern myth while Governor of Mississippi. Hal Fulmer uses myth to analyze religious rhetoric on Confederate General and southern hero Robert E. Lee. Mythical analysis is often associated with southern studies.[12] Several works in history and literature deal with southern myths and their effect on readers, audiences, and history. Rhetorical studies too prove mythical analysis to be both popular and intriguing.

While stereotypes and myths prove to be well-developed in southern studies by rhetorical scholars, the "great speaker" tradition of rhetorical criticism closely links to the neo-Aristotelian analysis so prevalent in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s when southern public address studies were at their prime. The beginnings of southern rhetorical scholarship are so closely tied to that of the field's neo-Aristotelian beginnings, that it is difficult to shake the image of southern oratory studies as passe.

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and Waldo W. Braden, "The Emergence of the Concept of Southern Oratory," *Southern Speech Journal* 26 (1961): 173-183.

[12] Stephen A. Smith, *Myth Media and the Southern Mind*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1985); Howard Dorgan, "Rhetoric of the United Confederate Veterans: A Lost Cause Mythology in the Making," in *Oratory in the New South*, ed. Waldo Braden (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 143-173; William Strickland, "James Kimble Vardaman: Manipulation Through Myths in Mississippi," in *The Oratory of Southern Demagogues*, ed. Cal M. Logue and Howard Dorgan (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 67-84; and Hal Fulmer, "Southern Clerics and the Passing

1.3.2 Great Speakers

Scholarship analyzing great speakers characterizes some of the very first work in the field of speech communication. These types of analyses served to link rhetoric with history while also developing a type of rhetorical canon. The very first work in southern rhetoric published by what was then the *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* in 1920 was an analysis of Henry Grady by Chas. F. Lindsley. Although Grady is never characterized as instituting "southern oratory," he is identified as a southerner and comments are made regarding his attitudes and their roots in southern culture.[13] In 1922 Charles A. Fritz recognizes several southerners in his ambitious essay tracing major periods of the history of oratory.[14] As Fritz discusses the periods of American oratorical development he mentioned southerners Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, and John Rutledge and later lists John Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Charles Sumner as great American orators, not as southerners. Much like Lindsley, Fritz fails to discuss these orators in light of southern qualities; instead these figures are listed as great historical *American* orators having characteristics of great speakers.

As time moved on and the field and interest developed, regional and national journals show significant numbers of great speaker studies on southern orators. Several of these studies have in common references to the southern speaker's associations with demagoguery. Examples include Clark's analysis of Pitchfork Ben Tillman, Waldo Braden's work on Mississippi demagoguery, Rita Kirk Whillock's more recent study on

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of Lee: Mythic Rhetoric and the Construction of a Sacred Symbol," *Southern Communication Journal* 55 (1990): 355-371.

[13] Chas. Lindsley, "Henry Woodfin Grady, Orator," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 6 (1920): 28-43.

[14] Charles A. Fritz, "A Brief Review of the Chief Periods in the History of Oratory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 8 (1922): 26-49.

David Duke, and, of course, Ernest Bormann's work on Huey P. Long. These works and others filled scholarly journals over many years.[15]

Logue and Dorgan added even more depth to the study of southern demagogues with their edited collection including several speakers such as Jeff Davis, James Vardaman, Tom Watson, Theodore Bilbo, Cole Blease, "Cotton Ed" Smith, Huey Long, and Gene Talmadge.[16] Most of these studies involve analyzing both the speaker and the characterizations of his demagoguery. While scholars justify such studies through the speaker's unique contributions to southern history, the very focus of such studies continues to define southern rhetoric in terms of white males and demagogic politicians. As demagogues gained scholarly attention, statesmen and politicians not associated with demagoguery also motivated scholars' inquiry. Studies on John C. Calhoun, Sam Houston, Henry Clay, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Henry Grady, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, as well as several others aroused the attention of scholars both as great speakers and as southerners.[17] Some, like studies of Carter and Clinton, added to the area of

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[15] Culpepper E. Clark, "Pitchfork Ben Tillman and the Emergence of Southern Demagoguery," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983): 423-432; Waldo Braden, "The Rhetoric of a Closed Society," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 45 (1980): 333-352; Rita Kirk Whillock, "Subversion of Argument: Lesson from the Demagogue Rhetoric of David Duke," *Political Communication* 11 (1994): 217-232; and Ernest G. Bormann, "Huey Long: Analysis of a Demagogue," *Today's Speech* 2 (1954): 16-20. Other works on southern demagoguery of interest include: Joseph Green, "William Goebel: Demagogue or Democrat?" *Southern Speech Journal* 27 (1961): 141-151; and Ernest G. Bormann, "A Rhetorical Analysis of the National Radio Broadcast of Senator Huey Pierce Long," *Speech Monographs* 24 (1957): 244-258.

[16] Cal M. Logue and Howard Dorgan, ed., *The Oratory of Southern Demagogues* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981).

[17] Here is just a sample of the works on these speakers: Bert E. Bradley, Jr., "John C. Calhoun's Argumentation in Defense of Slavery," *Southern Speech Journal* 35 (1969): 163-176; Wilmer Linkugel and Nancy Razok, "Sam Houston's Speech of Self Defense in the House of Representatives," *Southern Speech Journal* 34 (1969): 263-276; Robert T. Oliver, "Studies in the Political and Social Views of the Slave-Struggle," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 23 (1937): 409-417; Ronald Lee, "Electoral Politics and Visions of Community: Jimmy Carter, Virtue, and the Small Town Myth," *Western Journal of Communication* 59 (1995): 39-61; and Harold Barrett, "The Lamp of Henry Grady," *Today's Speech* 11 (1963): 19-22. In spring 2004 *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* devoted a complete issue to scholars' writings on King's "Letter From Birmingham Jail." Authors included Martha Solomon, Michael Osbourn, Michael Leff and Ebony Utley, and John Patton. Lynn Harter, Ronald Stephens, and Phyllis Japp, "President Clinton's Apology for

presidential rhetoric with southern flavor, while still others, like analyses of Martin Luther King, Jr., gave a perspective of African American's civil rights rhetoric. All these orators, and many like them, added to the great southern speaker research.

Both the demagogic studies and historical figure studies fall into the analytical domain of "great" speakers. Their evaluation, both as contributors to the southern oratorical canon and as inclusions in scholarship, is representative of traditional neo-Aristotelian analysis and a traditional definition of the South and southern culture as being predominately white and male.

1.3.3 Pulpit Oratory

The study of pulpit oratory represents another group of southern rhetorical studies. The Protestant and Evangelical characteristics of the South made southern pulpit oratory a natural area of study for rhetorical scholars. Considering the great impact of Evangelical religion on southern culture it is surprising more work in this area has not been done within speech communication. Those pieces of scholarship that do exist, however, clearly investigate various ways religion, sermons, and church going affected the southern mindset and culture. Examples of this category of research illustrate the tension of secular and spiritual found in southern cultural issues. Hal Fulmer's "Southern Clerics and the Passing of Lee," Walter Conser's "Political Rhetoric, Religious Sensibilities and the Southern Disclosure on Slavery" and Ray McCormick's "James Henly Thornwell and the Spirituality of the Church: Foundation of Pro-Slavery Ideology" exemplify the various religious connections of church life and southern culture.[18] While

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the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment: A Narrative of Remembrance, Redefinition and Reconciliation," *Howard Journal o f Communication* 11 (2000): 19-35.

[18] Fulmer, "Southern Clerics,"355; Walter H. Conser, "Political Rhetoric, Religious Sensibilities, and the Southern Discourse on Slavery," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 20 (1997): 15-24; and Ray

some works concentrate on southern preachers and their specific strategies in the pulpit, other scholarship looks into the development and associations of denominational stances. The rhetoric of Southern Baptists gained quite a bit of attention, as has that of other Baptist denominations. Carl Kell and Raymond Camp's work on the New Southern Baptist Convention and Howard Dorgan's work on Appalachian churches represent the journey into understanding southern culture through its church and pulpit rhetoric.[19] A few authors concentrate on specific southern preachers or church leaders in their works. Pepper Dill's essay on James Thornwell and Paula Wilson's work on Jesse Jackson represent some of the scholarship connecting southern preachers and the Evangelical dominance within southern culture.[20] All of these works, as well as others, signify strong connections between southern culture, identity, and discourse.[21]

McCormick, "James Henley Thornwell and the Spirituality of the Church: Foundation for Pro-Slavery Ideology," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 19 (1996): 59-67.

[19] Carl L. Kell and L. Raymond Camp, *In the Name of the Father: The Rhetoric of the New Southern Baptist Convention* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1999); and Howard Dorgan, *Giving Glory to God in Appalachia: Worship Practices of Six Baptist Subdenominations*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988); and Howard Dorgan, "'Ol' Time Way' Exhortation: Preaching in the Old Regular Baptist Church," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 10 (1987): 24-31.

[20] R. Pepper Dill, "An Analysis of Stasis in James H. Thornwell's Sermon, 'The Rights and Duties of Masters,'" *Journal of Communication and Religion* 11 (1988): 19-25; and Paula Wilson, "The Rhythm of Rhetoric: Jesse Jackson at the 1988 Democratic National Convention," *Southern Communication Journal* 61 (1996): 253-265. Also see Keith Griffin, "Jim Bakker Responds to Pressure," *Religious Communication Today* 5 (1982): 5-8.

[21] Other representations of such work in the field of speech communication include Stephanie Coopman, Joy Hart, James G. Hoagland Jr., and Dwight B. Billings "Speaking for God: The Functions of Church Leader Storytelling in Southern Appalachia in the 1950s," *American Communication Journal* 1 (1998): 1; William S. Stone, Jr. "The Southern Baptist Controversy: A Social Drama," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 15 (1992): 99-16; Tomas M. Huemer, Jr., "A House Divided: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the Southern Baptist Convention," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 14 (1991): 34-44; Ray C. Penn, "Competing Hermeneutical Foundations and Religious Communication: Why Protestants Can't Understand Each Other," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 11 (1988): 10-22; and Beryl F. McClerren, "Southern Baptists and the Religious Issue During the Presidential Campaigns of 1928-1960," *Central States Speech Journal* 18 (1967): 104-113. A very interesting article showing the clear lines of identity,

1.3.4 Civil Rights Oratory

One of the most developed areas of southern rhetoric examines the historical, rhetorical, and ideological manifestations of the Civil Rights Movement. Stuart Towns' recent book "*We Want Our Freedom": Rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement* anthologizes the activism, resistance, and strategies of both whites and blacks during the years of civil rights struggles.[22] Towns' anthology touches on several issues that are not only indicative of southern and civil rights rhetoric, but of southern rhetorical scholarship as well. Towns' book makes a concentrated effort to define civil rights rhetoric as including both whites and blacks. However, southern rhetoric typically falls under the definition of white, Anglo-centric rhetoric such as studies done on Henry Grady or John C. Calhoun demonstrate. This tension between the definitional constraints within rhetorical scholarship creates some problems when analyzing both civil rights rhetoric and southern rhetoric. Definitional constraints place most southern African American rhetoric as civil rights rhetoric. In searching for southern African American speakers on the various data bases for communication studies, such as Com Abstracts and EBSCO, nothing on African American southerners came up when "southern rhetoric," "southern orators," or "southern speakers" were used as search key words.[23] Another attempt employed by the phrase "civil rights rhetoric" showed many of the expected speakers such as W.E. B. Dubois, Martin Luther King, Jr., John Lewis, and Booker T. Washington. The Anglo-centric associations with the term "southern" left out key

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racism, and evangelical Christianity is Peter Ehranhaus and Susan A. Owen, "Race Lynching and Christian Evangelicalism: Performances of Faith," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 24 (2004): 276-292.

[22] W. Stuart Towns, *"We Want Our Freedom:" Rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement* (Westport: Praeger, 2002).

[23] This experiment was done using two databases used by the National Communication Association. The first is ComAbstracts and the second is the EBSCO database. These research databases both are used to list most journals in the field of Speech Communication.

African American southerners from the listing. This definitional discrepancy appears consistently throughout work on civil rights rhetoric.

Much of the work done in this area of study falls under the previously mentioned categories of southern rhetorical scholarship such as mythic analysis, great speaker studies, and pulpit or religious rhetoric. The links between these types of southern rhetoric and civil rights rhetoric show a connection between the two and yet they are separated within the minds of speech communication scholars. While it would be incorrect to conflate all civil rights rhetoric with all southern rhetoric, history tells us there is some crossover. For example, the success of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s non-violent protest is typically attributed to the strength of Evangelical religious symbolism in the Deep South. Many of the same tactics were less successful in northern areas of the country, such as Detroit, suggesting that King's symbolic non-violent discourse exemplified southern rhetorical characteristics. One rhetorical scholar claims King's biblical connotations motivated southern protesters within the bus boycott and its success.[24] Yet King is rarely considered a "southern orator." The point here is not that southern, as a descriptor, should supersede civil rights. On the contrary, if anything, we need a more complicated approach to study the ways in which southern and civil rights oratory both complement and contradict one another.

1.4 Research Questions and Terminology

1.4.1 What Is Southern Rhetoric?

Before identifying the problems with current scholarship in southern rhetoric, we must recognize the problematic usage of the term "southern" in discussing southern

[24] Gary S. Selby, "Framing Social Protest: The Exodus Narrative in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Montgomery Bus Boycott Rhetoric," *Journal o f Communication and Religion* 24 (2001): 68-94.

rhetoric. Explaining "southerness" in words has brought humility to even the most astute southern cultural critic. Historian Michael O'Brien articulates the problem: "To undertake a venture into the history of the American South presents an immediate problem. There is no agreement on the meaning of the term 'the South.'"[25] Even well-known literary critic and historian Louis Rubin Jr. is left explaining one abstract concept with another: "The 'Southernness' in Southern literature might be said to be like the 'sex' in 'sex' appeal – we know it's there, and we know how to respond to it, but frequently there is no explaining why it works the way it does or precisely how it achieves its effects."[26] Sociologist John Shelton Reed echoes the problem of specifying what it means to be southern: "Any way of defining the South encounters problems stemming from the fact that "Southern-ness" is very much a matter of degree."[27] Scholars of southern rhetoric seem to suffer from similar problems when describing, analyzing, and defining exactly what makes southern rhetoric *southern*. As soon as one or two-dimensional definitions are chosen a more subtle third or fourth dimension, making up the modern day South, becomes problematic. Definitions that characterize the historical South may unnecessarily limit and constrain discussions when they are used to describe the contemporary South. While the degree of change taking place in the South and the reasons for that change often leave scholars debating against each other, the fact that the South is indeed changing seems to be agreed upon. The changing South, therefore, requires a flexible definition.

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[25] Michael O'Brien, *The Idea of the American South, 1920-1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), xix.
[26] Louis Rubin, Jr., "From Comfrey to Ithaca; Or, the 'Southernness of Southern Literature,'" *The Southern Review* (Winter 1990).
[27] John Shelton Reed, *The Enduring South* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1972), 14.

The definitions associated with southern rhetoric stem from terminology in other disciplines as well as attempts at reclaiming southern public address for rhetorical studies. Southern rhetoric was first analyzed in southern literature and later utilized in works of southern history. English and history made some very broad and sweeping claims about southern rhetoric early in its formation as an area of study. To reclaim the area, public address scholars look for ways to define southern public address as befitting the speech communication discipline. Overall, public address scholars attribute being "southern" to regional location, message topic, and cultural characteristics. Yet through their own struggles to form a coherent and complete definition of southern and South, southern rhetoric scholars seem to grasp at whatever characteristics seem definable. As a result they tend to come at the definitions from several angles. For example, Waldo Braden asserts a geographical definition: "In my judgment the only formula which will cover all speakers of the South is a simple one based upon geography. By this measure a southern orator is anyone who flourished in the region." Braden goes on to admit problems in defining the southern region, but he contends these problems are less difficult than the "myths others" have imposed.[28] The "others" of which he speaks are those scholars in English and history having made things difficult for communication-based scholars of southern rhetoric. He also adds the need for a "southern audience" to the criteria of southern rhetoric.[29] Public speaking scholars, versus scholars in other disciplines, typically view the audience as an entity worthy of analysis. Yet Braden also acknowledges southern oratory may be given outside the South to "national gatherings,"

[28] John Shelton Reed establishes that most people base southern culture on myths even today. See "'The South of the Mind': Regional Attitudes and Stereotypes" in *The Enduring South* (Chapel Hill, U of North Carolina P, 1972).
[29] Waldo Braden, *Oratory in the New South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979): 1.

the "United States Congress," or "lecture tours in the North."[30] Seemingly simple characteristics of speaking such as the geographical location, audience demographics, and the success of a speaker in the South remain slightly ambivalent. What is a "southern audience?" Is it people "from" the South, as in born and raised there, or people living in the South, as in Atlanta or Charlotte? In the South of today those may be very different audiences, both found in geographical locations considered southern, but still very different. Braden's discussion of a southern speaker also remains difficult to nail down. Again, is this someone born and raised in the South, someone who lived there two years, or someone adept at public speaking and, therefore, successful in southern states, such as Ronald Reagan?[31] Although Braden gives seemingly simple definitions for southern rhetoric, the reality of the contemporary South makes these definitions difficult to apply consistently.

Another attempt at defining the "southern" of southern rhetoric comes from Kevin Kearney, who recognizes speaker motive and context, familiarity with southern culture, and place of residence as possible ways of distinguishing southern rhetoric. In his discussion of speaker motive and context, Kearney offers the example of nullification as a uniquely "southern" context and motive by speakers such as John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay. He declares the criteria valid because they entail a "southern response to what was interpreted as a southern problem by southerners who were motivated to act in the best interest of the South."[32] For Kearney these criteria are at the heart of "southerness." While I agree that motive and context may help determine if a text may

[30] Ibid.
[31] This idea behind Southern rhetoric is utilized by Kurt Ritter, "Ronald Reagan's 1960s Southern Rhetoric: Courting Conservatives for the GOP," *The Southern Communication Journal* 64 (1999): 333-345. Ritter

qualify as southern rhetoric, those very things can be quite difficult to measure in contemporary times. Looking back at a speech by Calhoun or Henry Clay, who have already been designated as southern speakers by literary anthologies, helps us define southern rhetoric in terms of what was considered southern for Calhoun and Clay. At a time when the South was the most clearly defined, prior to and during the Civil War, Calhoun and Clay spoke to southern audiences that remain very different from later audiences in the South. The context of those speeches may help us define the South of that particular time period, but helps little in defining southern rhetoric today.

As scholarship in southern rhetoric continues, scholars drop the overall debate about what is southern rhetoric for an even more ambiguous one on what is southern. Stephen Smith looks toward mass media culture about the South as southern rhetoric.[33] Recent work by Stuart Towns, however, adds issues of memory, culture, and history to the definition of what should be considered "southern" rhetoric. He acknowledges that "southern" has various characteristics difficult to narrow down or generalize. Southern people, geography, economics, and spirituality develop as possible descriptions. Towns focuses on spiritual conditions that tend to define what it means to be southern: "Perhaps the most important one is the intense ties to place, the land, the soil, the family – in short, a sense of locale."[34] He also considers the conservative, religious mindset, the nation's largest concentration of African Americans, a bias against outside agitations, and the southern lifestyle (including food, language, chivalry, and respect for womanhood). Towns differs from Braden and Kearney in that his approach tends to focus on definitions

takes Reagan, a California Republican, and shows how he utilizes southern rhetoric for the purpose of persuading a southern audience.

[32] Kevin Kearney, "What's Southern about Southern Rhetoric?" *Southern Speech Journal* 32 (1966): 19-30.

[33] Smith, *Myth Media and the Southern Mind*, 1985.

of southern rather than definitions of southern rhetoric. The descriptions are full of cultural and historical aspects of the South instead of things such as geography, audience location, or speaker motivation.

The cultural significance plays greatly into Towns' description of southern memory:

> Above all shaping the South, the southern audience and the southern speaker, there is the traditional memory of the South which has configured the way southerners have lived for generations, regardless of whether it was "truth" or not: the moonlight and magnolias, mint juleps on the veranda, and Scarlet O'Hara of *Gone with the Wind* fame; the days of slavery and oppressions for a quarter of the population; the almost cultic worship and reverence of the Old South, the Confederacy, and the Lost Cause; the unpleasant memories of Reconstruction and the bitter and harsh Jim Crow laws of segregation days; the last stand to white supremacy and the difficult battles of the civil rights era; the sudden prosperity and the knowledge of being in the national spotlight – in a positive sense for a change – during the "Sunbelt" years of the 1980s and 1990s. All this cultural memory, and more, is the South.[35]

Indeed, Towns' description of the South illustrates the association of "southern" with the mythical illusions of a created memory, or perhaps invented history. This created southern memory developed based on history and literature in combination with stereotypes, selected folklore, and cultural complexity. Within this memory and its corresponding identity one finds those things indicative of the southern "experience." Towns argues that southern memory helps define and distinguish both the southern speaker and southern audience. Towns' definition relies on the idea that memory is created. While historical information, experience, folklore, stereotypes, and cultural

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[34] W. Stuart Towns, *Oratory and Rhetoric in the Nineteenth Century South: A Rhetoric of Defense* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 3.
[35] Ibid., 5.

distinctions all shape memory, the rhetorical scholar would be remiss not to recognize the selective aspects of memory, shared or otherwise.

The scholarship of Waldo Braden, Kevin Kearney, and Stuart Towns continues to have a large impact on southern oratorical studies. These scholars' attempts to define and characterized the unique traits of southern oratory give contemporary scholars a "starting point" for their own endeavors. Yet, like many southern "yarns," there is more to the telling than has already been told. While there might never be a final definition of southern public address, scholars should not arbitrarily invent a definition simply for the sake of scholarship without questioning the invention and characteristics in creating such a definition. Attempts in the past were indeed made to establish some consistency in defining what it means to be "southern" and how that identity appears rhetorically. Dallas Dickey, Waldo Braden, Kevin Kearney, and Stuart Towns all endeavor to clarify what "southern" means. They use such possibilities as geography and sentiment (or myth), but fail to develop consistently coherent criteria to measure "southern." While such definitions also baffle scholars in other fields, such as literature and history, the need for a more complete understanding of how and why definitions in southern rhetoric do exist may help clarify other aspects of southern public address scholarship. To date, scholars leave southern rhetoric still suffering from dated, stereotypical definitions and notions. Such persistent inconsistencies in defining southern rhetoric indicate that narrowing down the definition remains a complicated task. Describing and defining "southern" remains elusive at best. The richness of culture, ethnicity, history, religion, tradition, myth, and heritage makes southern identity a multi-dimensional concept suffering from one-dimensional analysis.

This project advances a definition of southern rhetoric that allows for broadened analysis and further invention, a definition offering multi-dimensional possibilities. In order to accomplish such a task, the definition of "southern" must be fluid depending on both text and context and how these interact together. Such fluidity may utilize geography and claim Washington, DC or Dallas, Texas southern in some cases while not in others. The fluidity should allow for both the past and the present as they intertwine and intercept each other especially when analyzing the rhetorical complications surrounding the symbolic context of the Confederate Battle Flag. In other words, the definition will defy any universal concrete conceptualization, for as soon as "southern" is defined in one context an exception develops within another. This *is* the "southernness" of the current day South, a "postmodern" South. To deal with the rhetoric of this South scholars will need to understand the layering of contexts, symbols, and history that constructs this South.

For this type of understanding, we can turn to southern literary studies for the concept of a "postsouth" which captures the complexity of dealing with multiple Souths. The term was first used by literary critic Lewis Simpson in 1980 to describe southern literature that viewed a "social order at once strongly sacramental and sternly moralistic" with "irony." This literary vision transpired with the work of William Faulkner to contemporary times. Most recently Michael Kreyling gives the postsouthern vision an optimistic role, claiming desirability on the part of postsouthern writers to rejuvenate and reclaim a literature steeped in politically conservative roots.[36] Literary critic Richard Gray maintains an ambiguity in defining the current Southerner who, "in effect, still belongs in two worlds, two moral territories, even if he is turning back ever less easily or

frequently to one of these; in terms of his mind or imagination at least, he remains an amphibious creature."[37] All these scholars agree on the changing vision of the South, the southerner, and southern culture. The postsouthern South is in search of meaning. Having neglected the "moralistic social order" of another, older South, the postsoutherner searches for something still rooted in "southernness," but new and different from the past. The postsouth, then, remains rooted in historical pasts while also clearly evident in its diverse contemporary version which is the result of layered meanings from various views on the South and southerness.

This dissertation establishes that the postsouthern layering is evident in the criticism of Waldo Braden and his contemporaries, but the lack of attention during the public address renaissance has halted progress in developing any real postsouthern rhetorical analysis. Critics have utilized the only tools they had to measure the postsouthern, tools left over from a "moralistic social order." This paradox leaves scholarly inventiveness in southern rhetoric in a schizophrenic state.

1.4.2 What Was the Public Address Renaissance?

In 1988 Stephen Lucas proclaimed: "The study of American public address is in the midst of a remarkable renaissance."[38] At that time the statement was no small claim. Now, however, its truth seems to be taken for granted. The renaissance, Lucas claimed, came after a "demise" of traditional "historical-critical method" during the 1960s and 1970s. What emerged during the renaissance was a very different vision of rhetorical criticism and studies in public address as Lucas describes it: "Let us recognize once and

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[36] Simpson, *The Brazen Face of History*; and Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*.
[37] Richard Gray, *Writing the South: Ideas of an American Region* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 231.

for all that studies in public address can focus on historical or contemporary rhetorical phenomena, can range from mere chronicle to the most audacious interpretation and assessment, can—indeed, should—adopt whatever critical posture works best to explicate the object of inquiry."[39] This type of criticism, inquiry, and assessment has resulted in a "public address renaissance" that continues to influence scholarship in rhetoric and public address..

Unfortunately, the field of southern rhetoric only minimally experienced a parallel stage of growth prior to and during the renaissance. In the 1930s through the 1950s oratory and public address served as the main site of scholarly focus for rhetorical criticism. In 1965 Edwin Black challenged the traditional approaches to public address by denouncing neo-Aristotelianism, the prevailing method of criticism at the time.[40] After Black's attack, critics drifted away from oratory, analyzing instead social movements, rhetoric of confrontation, campaign rhetoric, and protest rhetoric.[41] Here, in this move away from the traditional neo-Aristotelian paradigm, one finds the decline of southern public address. Interest in southern oratory was lost because publications on southern oratory tended to hold to traditional historical and neo-Aristotelian paradigms while post-Black developments veered away from the traditional critical perspective. As a result of the decline in public address studies, southern studies of rhetoric fell by the wayside and the discipline never returned to this rich discursive arena, despite the "renaissance" to which Lucas refers.

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[38] Stephen Lucas, "The Renaissance of American Public Address: Text and Context in Rhetorical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74 (1988): 241-260.
[39] Ibid., 243.
[40] For a discussion of the effects of Black's attack on rhetoric see Jim Kuypers and Andrew King, *Twentieth-Century Roots of Rhetorical Studies* (Westport: Praeger, 2001).
[41] Lucas, "Renaissance."

1.4.3 In What Ways Was Southern Public Address Affected by Missing the Renaissance?

While the public address renaissance hugely influenced the changing directions of public address scholarship, southern rhetorical studies remained relatively stagnant. As a result, southern public address suffers several clear effects by missing the renaissance: 1) Southern public address studies fails to benefit significantly from post neo-Aristotelian methodologies, 2) it lacks attention to more case study compilation, 3) it suffers from a derivative history that never fully gained validation in its own scholarship, and 4) it suffers from lack of teaching in academic institutions. Each of these unfortunate consequences can be attributed to the lack of attention garnered by southern rhetoric today. Analyzing these effects helps us gain insight into the problems associated with current southern rhetorical scholarship.

Significantly, the failure to reach the renaissance results in a lack of methodological and canonical variety and diversity in southern rhetorical studies. Neglect of southern public address is evident when looking at feminist public address studies and studies of the rhetoric of other marginalized groups**.** Both of these areas have gained canonical acceptance and have developed new methodological insight.[42] In rhetorical studies at large these areas gained a great deal of attention. African American, gay and lesbian, Latino/a ,and gender-based case studies continue to be discussed and regarded as legitimate parts of the canon, yet public address achieved little in the way of adding formerly excluded areas in the southern oratory canon. New critical perspectives also

[42] For examples of such studies see Kirt Wilson, *The Reconstruction Desegregation Debate: The Politics of Equality and the Rhetoric of Place, 1870-1875* (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002); Celeste Michelle Condit and John Louis Lucraites, *Crafting Equality: America's Anglo-African Word* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); and Karlyn Kors Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, 2 vols, (Westport: Praeger P, 1989).

gained little in southern rhetorical studies when compared to public address studies in general. While public address added critical perspectives from African American, Marxist, feminist and critical theoretical positions, southern rhetoric never quite experienced the benefit of these contemporary critical viewpoints.[43]

As a result southern rhetoric as a field of study never reaped the advantages of the public address renaissance, such as the inclusion of female and minority speakers into its canon. For example, numerous civil rights rhetorical studies have been done including those on Martin Luther King Jr.; however, looking at King's rhetoric as southern rhetoric has yet to be developed. He is typically viewed as an African American, religious, or civil rights activist.[44] Dow and Tonn's study of Ann Richards' 1988 Democratic National Convention Keynote is another example. Dow and Tonn attribute Richards' "narrative" style to feminine genre, giving no consideration to southern influences as a possible cause for her narrative approach.[45] Studies such as these ignore the influence of southern rhetorical style and stress other factors for what may be attributed to southern cultural influence. For example, could a "narrative" feminine style also be attributed to southern storytelling and the long-standing oral traditions prevalent in former

[43] There have been a few studies done in these theoretical perspectives in Southern rhetoric, but their numbers are few. See Victoria Gallagher, "Remembering Together: Rhetoric, Integration and Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 60 (1995): 109-119; and Balthrop, "Culture, Myth, and Ideology as Public Argument," 339.

[44] Typically we see King critiqued as a Civil Rights activist such as in the Spring 2004 issue of *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* where authors re-visited King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail." Michael Leff and Ebony A. Utley, "Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from a Birmingham Jail," (37-53); Martha Solomon Watson, "The Issue is Justice: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Response to the Birmingham Clergy," (1-22); Michael Osborn, "Rhetorical Distance in 'Letter From a Birmingham Jail,' (23-37); and John Patton, "A Transforming Response: Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter From a Birmingham Jail,' (53-67). His rhetoric may also be viewed as African American rhetoric, Mark Lawrence McPhail, "Dessentializing Difference: Transformative Visions in Contemporary Black Thought," *Howard Journal of Communications* 13 (2002): 77-98. King's rhetoric is also viewed as religious rhetoric, Jon B. Ohlhauser, "Human Rhetoric: Accounting for Spiritual Intervention," *Howard Journal of Communications* 7 (1996): 339-349; and David Bobbitt and Harold Mixon, "Prophecy and Apocalypse in the Rhetoric of Martin Luther King Jr.," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 17 (1994): 27-39.

agricultural-based southern society? Are there aspects of civil rights rhetoric that are attributed to racial divides that may be a result of southern cultural dealings of race? Viewing southern rhetorical influence in a fresh light is essential to developing other explanations for cultural and rhetorical influence on contemporary and current public address. As it stands now, southern public address scholarship remains in stasis with little novel invention to promote interest in the area.

Due to the lack of renaissance in southern oratory and the minimal development of diversity within the southern rhetorical canon, southern rhetoric remains plagued by stereotypes. The first stereotype is that the southern speaker is a white male demagogue, a huckster who appeals to sentiment. Examples of this stereotype can be found in the LSU press series, which gives a typical southern rhetoric canon. The speakers catalogued in the "Old South" and "New South" book series are predominately white male politicians with the exceptions of one essay contrasting Booker T. Washington and W.E. B. Dubois. The southern demagogue study maintains the southern orator as male, white, and political. Logue's and Dorgan's edited book on contemporary southern rhetoric, published in 1987, features one essay on southern women and one essay on southern black rhetoric. Stuart Towns' anthologies somewhat broaden the genre by including African Americans and females (both black and white), but still show little original advancement either methodologically or by way of extending the southern rhetorical canon.[46]

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[45] Bonnie Dow and Mari Boor Tonn, "'Feminine Style' and Political Judgment in the Rhetoric of Ann Richards," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 79 (1993): 286-302.

[46] The LSU press series was the brainchild of Waldo Braden and Dallas Dickey, who died before the first book was finished. After Braden's retirement, work continued under the editorship of Cal Logue and Howard Dorgan. Separate from the LSU series, Stuart Towns wrote two anthologies on southern oratory and rhetoric. Waldo Braden, ed., *Oratory in the Old South 1828-1860*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970); and Waldo Braden, ed., *Oratory of the New South*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State

While stereotypes and myths, such as demagoguery and grand-eloquence, create several difficult consequences for the future of southern rhetorical studies, the derivative nature of southern public address studies complicates these stereotypes. Past scholars responded to stereotypes associated with the South in fields such as history and English. Because of this response, southern public address scholars found themselves in a defensive position when discussing southern oratory. The stereotype of demagoguery in reference to southern rhetoric remains an obdurate example of the problem. The fact that a book exists devoted to southern demagoguery simply reinforces the stereotype, despite references by the editors that demagoguery is not just a southern phenomenon. After all one does not see books on midwestern demagoguery or northeastern demagoguery.

Southern rhetorical studies began during the early years of American public address studies. Looking for clear ways to distinguish themselves from scholars in other academic disciplines, rhetorical scholars aimed their work at historical oratorical texts. In 1947 Dallas Dickey made an official call for southern oratorical studies.[47] Southern studies had gained popularity and validation in both history and literature.[48] With history and literature leading the charge in southern studies, southern oratory seemed a viable and productive way for rhetoric to claim legitimacy and distinction, since no one else was looking at southern public address from a specifically rhetorical viewpoint.

University Press, 1979); Calvin Logue and Howard Dorgan, *The Oratory of the Southern Demagogues* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); Calvin Logue and Howard Dorgan, *A New Diversity in Contemporary Southern Rhetoric* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987); W. Stuart Towns, *Oratory and Rhetoric in the Nineteenth-Century South: Rhetoric of Defense* (Westport: Praeger Press, 1998, 2000); and W. Stuart Towns, *Public Address in the Twentieth-Century South: The Evolution of a Region* (Westport: Praeger Press, 2000).

[47] Dallas Dickey, "Southern Oratory: A Field for Research," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 33 (1947): 458-467.

[48] George Tindall, C. Vann Woodward, and other historians maintained discourse on the South. Authors Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, Walker Percy, Zora Neale Hurston, Flannery O'Connor and Margaret Mitchell sustained literary discussion on Southern culture.

The advantages gained from the models developed in history and English would soon give way to problems as the very tools that seemingly provided validation trapped scholars, forcing them to take a defensive position on behalf of rhetoric. Consequently, the difficulties found in southern public address studies exist as several contributing threads within a fabric. In the attempt to identify unique rhetorical devices associated with southern oratory, these early scholars maintained a defensive authorial style regarding southern oratory's stereotypes found in history and English, which resulted in their own created stereotypes and myths. These created rhetorical stereotypes and myths remain problematic for contemporary analysis and unnecessarily restrict the development of southern rhetorical studies.

The problem of a defensive posturing and of the archetypal southern demagogue manifest themselves in the early works of Dallas Dickey and Waldo Braden, who defend southern public address against the stereotypes associated with style. Both scholars open the field by taking historians such as Merle Curti to task over their description of southern oratory and southern speakers. Dallas Dickey is first to take on the stereotypical characterizations given southern orators by historians in his 1946 essay, "Were they Ephemeral and Florid?"[49] Historian Merle Curti gives the description of "ephemeral and florid" to southern orations, to which Dickey responded by questioning both the description and its legitimacy.[50] Similarly Waldo Braden defends southern oratory against descriptions of grand-eloquence and verbosity given by historians. In his 1961 article, "The Emergence of the Concept of Southern Oratory," he surveys descriptions of southern oratory by historians and journalists. The descriptions identify southern oratory

[49] Dickey, "Ephemeral and Florid?" 16-20.
[50] Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (1943), p. 440.

as having a "mellifluous quality," being "embroidered oratorical rhetoric," and spoken by a speaker with the southern orator image.[51]

The southern orator was stereotyped as well. Braden claims such views of southern oratory are myths that perpetuate other southern cultural myths. Both Dickey and Braden look to historians for the initial descriptions of southern oratory. Finding these descriptions exaggerated and sentimental, they work to defend southern rhetoric, and indeed rhetoric in general, against these assumptions about style. This defensive stance develops into a limitation to critical invention, causing southern rhetorical studies to be stereotyped, whether rightly so or not, as neo-Aristotelian and dated. Derived from existing canons in English and history, the archetypal southern white male demagogue was treated as the representative of southern public address speakers. For example, much of Braden's work borrows from models of English when he surveys readers and literary anthologies containing oratory as literature. Almost all, if not all, of the canonized speeches were delivered by white male politicians and/or preachers described in grand terms. By starting with English literature as a model, Braden is forced to deal with a pre-existing canon of speeches derived from outside the rhetorical tradition, which reinforces the stereotypes predating any rhetorical analysis of the speeches.

Both Braden and Dickey begin the study of southern oratory by focusing on fields legitimized within the academy (history and English). These two scholars then denounce the conclusions or assumptions made by historians and anthologists. In doing so they are forced to defend southern rhetoric against stereotypes in the form of assumptions about style and the southern white male demagogic orator. This defense greatly shapes and defines the future of southern oratorical studies by complicating the analysis and

[51] Braden, "Emergence," 173.

descriptions of southern public address. Because much of southern public address scholarship remains tied to assumptions made by other disciplines, scholars spend most of their time defending oratory against those positions rather than working on critical or methodological invention within southern rhetoric.

The discussion of this "myth" of the romanticized southern demagogue indicates this defensive yet stagnant position. The "myth debate" in southern rhetoric takes place on two different levels. The first regards the myth of southern delivery as stylistic grandiosity and emotional delivery. Second is the tenacious reference to the character of the southern orator as huckster and demagogue. These mythical associations coupled with the prevailing descriptions of the South, a moon and magnolia romantic vision, complicate the job of the rhetorical critic. Thus, it is necessary to examine the concept of myth in this context to understand how the definition of southern oratory suffers from assumptions made by those in English and history.

Waldo Braden identifies "southern oratory" as a "myth, a legend, a symbol – 'an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image.'"[52] He later extends this reference by testing southern oratory myths.[53] Other scholars accept Braden's characterization of southern oratory as riddled with myth. Stuart Towns, for instance, relies on Braden's description of the southern orator as a type of mythic folk hero speaking to a South bound to oral traditions. Towns maintains Braden's argument that the southern orator is a myth: "He is often portrayed as a huckster, a charlatan, a demagogue, or a con man selling 'snake oil.'"[54] He also explains that the myth is indeed

[52] Ibid.
[53] Waldo Braden, "Southern Oratory Reconsidered: A Search for An Image," *The Southern Speech Journal* 29 (1964): 303-315.
[54] Towns, *Nineteenth Century*, 1.

a stereotype and offers examples of contradiction: "there have been many spokesmen and spokeswomen who were genuinely seeking humane and tolerant solutions to the various problems of race, poverty, and defeat which the southern region has endured."[55] Thus, Towns views the southern orator as a mythical, stereotyped figure suffering from a misrepresentation. The speakers "genuinely seeking humane and tolerant solutions" need preservation and discussion to clearly understand southern oratory. Although similar to Braden in tone and argument, Towns does add a subtle difference; he argues the stereotype is not credible because it fails to represent all the "men and women" who spoke to solve problems. These scholars argue against stereotypes and assumptions as a result of the derivative nature of southern rhetoric. Studies in southern history and literature were well-established long before Dallas Dickey's call in the 1940s. The result was a long history of southern rhetoric defending itself against the perceptions held by other disciplines to the neglect of canon development or the use and invention of new theoretical and methodological approaches to looking at what currently constitutes southern rhetoric, much less what may be added to the canon.

Not only does the derivative nature of southern public address scholarship keep in place negative stereotypes and myths about the southern speaker, the decline of southern public address scholarship and its failure to reach the public address renaissance has the subsequent pragmatic problem – the decline in courses taught on southern public address, oratory, or southern rhetoric. At a time when diversity and cultural awareness weighs heavily on the minds of academics, it seems odd such a course would not be more readily offered. In an informal survey of twenty southern public state universities, of which fifteen responded, only four still teach a course dealing with southern rhetoric or public

[55] Ibid, 2.

address. When asked if such a course had ever been offered, five had indeed offered a class in the past. When asked why they dropped the course or had not considered such a course the answers ranged from four with a lack of faculty support to one with curriculum requirements.[56] This informal survey indicates the level of interest in southern rhetoric; one can still see the lack of development instigated by public address studies. If students are no longer exposed to an obvious area of southern cultural studies such as rhetoric and public address, then who will be responsible for theoretical diversity or canon development in future discussions on southern rhetoric? A lack of student exposure coupled with the scarcity of publication in the area shows clear neglect and need in this area of study.

Missing the public address renaissance halted the evolution of southern rhetorical studies. The area of study suffers from a neglect of contemporary methodological development, a rigid misrepresentative canon, and the need to advance away from the disciplines of history and literature within the academy. Southern rhetoric deserves a much needed reconceptualizing.

1.4.4 How Does the History of Southern Identity Affect Southern Rhetorical Scholarship?

Due to the stilted research in southern rhetoric, southern studies lacks a rhetorical investigation of the evolving nature of southern identity and its effects on southern rhetoric. This issue is an important one due to its relation to the evolution of southern

[56] A short e-mail survey was sent to the Dept. Chairs at these schools: University of Alabama, Florida State, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Mississippi, University of Arkansas, University of Texas—Austin, Louisiana State, University of Southern Mississippi, Troy State, Georgia Southern, University of Memphis, University of Tennessee, University of North Carolina, University of South Carolina, Clemson, University of Virginia, Texas A&M, and the University of Kentucky. Chairs were asked three simple questions: If their department had ever offered a course in southern rhetoric, if currently had such a course on the "books," and if they had taught it at one time, but had stopped teaching the course, why.

rhetoric as an area of study. While southern oratorical scholars helped define many of the directions and subjects associated with the area, notions of southern identity at the time of the origin also contributed to the scholarship.

The silence on the relationship between southern identity and southern rhetorical development is an interesting one. Southern literature long ago asked how identity affected that area of study. Southern history has also asked such a question.[57] Yet southern rhetoric seems oblivious to the direct connections between how the concept of what is "southern" evolved and how that evolution influenced scholars of the field. Waldo Braden does casually pass through this territory when he discusses the emergence of southern oratory as associated with the drive to preserve southern literature, yet he fails to ask the questions regarding the ideologies and deeper motivations behind such a movement.[58] Like southern literature, southern public address was greatly shaped by the views and definitions of southern identity first assigned by the Vanderbilt Agrarians and later advocated by Richard M. Weaver. Critics of both the Agrarians and Weaver denounce their white, masculine, privileged view, deeming it naive at best and elitist at worst. Weaver, being a direct apostle of Agrarian John Crowe Ransom, suffers from some of the same political mindset. Yet the influence of both the Agrarians and Weaver on the thought and motivations of southern rhetoric greatly influenced its evolution. The consequences of such a connection further legitimize the need to question the current state of southern rhetorical scholarship. Southern rhetorical studies represents a major part of the history of American rhetoric and public address. The lack of scholarly

[57] For a discussion of the influence of the Agrarians on the evolution of southern literature see Kreyling, *The Invention of Southern Literature.* Historian C. Vann Woodward explains the problems for history in accepting the Agrarian argument for southern history in *The Burden of Southern History*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 8-9.

attention to its definition, problems, and grounding creates a gap in much needed analysis in the field. In fact the results of these issues invite speculation about the effectiveness and thoroughness of the public address renaissance.

1.5 Chapter Summaries

- **Chapter 2 Defining Southern Rhetoric: The Southern Agrarian Influence**

In this chapter I begin a meta-critical analysis of the development of southern rhetoric focusing on the Southern Agrarians and their influence on the perception and defining of southern culture. This chapter argues that the ideological position held by the twelve writers of *I'll Take My Stand* greatly affected definitions of "southern" later to show up in southern rhetorical scholarship.

- **Chapter 3 Extending the Definitions in Southern Public Address: Richard Weaver, Dallas Dickey, and Waldo Braden**

This chapter continues the meta-critical analysis, paying particular attention to how the influences of the Vanderbilt Agrarians continued in the works of those primarily in southern public address studies. Richard Weaver, Dallas Dickey and Waldo Braden all contribute in various ways to the continuance of definitions and ideology that began with the Agrarians.

- **Chapter 4 The Ghost of Waldo Braden: Haunted without a Renaissance**

This chapter examines how scholarship in southern public address is a direct descendent of the work done by Waldo Braden, which results in an "anxiety of influence" suffered by scholars such as Stuart Towns and Stephen Smith, who fail to step away from the Braden's influence. The result of this anxiety has left southern rhetorical studies with four major problems: a rigid canon with little to no diversity, which validates the

Agrarian view of the South, a lack of theoretical diversity, leaving southern rhetoric in neo-Aristotelian and New Critical analysis, a loss of institutional support such as course offerings and publication, and a demise in the very preservation that motivated the area of study. To help rectify these problems I propose a postsouthern framework using methods of Maurice Charland on constitutive rhetoric and Linda Hutcheon's theoretical work on parody.

- **Chapter 5 The League of the South: Constitutive Rhetoric and Southern Cultural Identity**

This chapter begins the first of three case studies demonstrating methods and analysis designed to show various contemporary views found in the postsouth. The League of the South provides an example of a grass roots organization playing off the Confederate tradition. They stand for non-violent secession, state sovereignty, and the preservation of southern culture. In this chapter, I use the lens of Maurice Charland's constitutive rhetoric to demonstrate the way that the LoS discourse constitutes a particular type of southern identity. In addition Linda Hutcheon's parody theory helps identify the historical layering of the postsouth.

- **Chapter 6 "Give 'em Hell, Zell!" Senator Zell Miller, Parody of the Southern Demagogue**

Chapter six presents the case study of Georgia Democratic Senator Zell Miller and his speech at the Republican National Convention in 2004. Miller gives an excellent example of political postsouthern rhetoric. This chapter discusses how Miller uses issues typically appealing to a southern audience at the national level. Miller instantiates an example of postsouthern parody to those who reject his constitutive definition of southern.

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[58] Braden, "Emergence."

- **Chapter 7 The "Other" Southerner: The Rhetoric of Charlotte Hawkins Brown**

Scholars traditionally define southern as white, male, and patriarchal. The example of Charlotte Hawkins Brown and her book "*Mammy": An Appeal to the Heart of the South* challenges this definition. Brown's book, written in 1919 gives an example of works left outside the southern rhetorical canon. This chapter looks into Brown's rhetoric as well as her historical situation to gain insight into how the postsouth developed and functions in relation to whiteness.

- **Chapter 8 Conclusion**

Finally, chapter eight provides a summary of the preceding chapters and discussions. Focusing on the results of this postsouth analysis, I critique the strengths and weaknesses of the case studies and discuss possible directions for further study.

Chapter 2.

Defining Southern Rhetoric: The Southern Agrarian Influence

> And when our Southern Agrarians issue a volume entitled *I'll Take My Stand* (their 'stand in Dixie'), their claims as to what they *are* get definition in terms of scene, environment, situation, context, ground. Indeed in the title we can also see another important ambiguity of motive emerging. When taking their stand *in* Dixie, they are also taking their stand *for* Dixie. Their stand in Dixie would be a "conditioning" kind of cause; but a corresponding stand *for* Dixie would be a teleological or purposive kind of cause.
>
> -- Kenneth Burke
> *A Grammar of Motives*, 1945[1]

> One way to interpret a subject is to define its nature --- to describe the fixed features of its being. Definition is an attempt to capture essence . . . Definitions accordingly deal with fundamental and unchanging properties.
>
> --Richard M. Weaver
> *Language is Sermonic*, 1963[2]

To discuss the South or its culture requires scholars at some point to attempt to define "South" and "southerness." Typically the need arises from two impulses, the desire to make sure the reader or audience understands to what the scholar refers, but another more serious motive is the one that Weaver suggests, the need to capture the essence of the South in order to argue from an agreed upon definition. In other words, scholars begin by defining "South" or "southern" and from that point make their case. Meanwhile the reader, having agreed upon the definition, is even closer to being persuaded by the upcoming argument. Both the Vanderbilt Agrarians and Richard Weaver understood that to define something was, in many ways, to own it.

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[1] Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), 24 (emphasis in original).
[2] Richard Weaver, *Language is Sermonic: Richard M. Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric*, ed. Richard L. Johannesen, Rennard Strickland, and Ralph Eubanks (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 209.

Just how much was southern rhetorical studies shaped and molded by the definitions of the South and southern brought forward by the Southern Agrarians and later by Richard Weaver? In the southern rhetorical "genealogy" that follows in the next two chapters, we can see a consistent and striking pattern of influences passed from the Vanderbilt Agrarians and Richard Weaver, who greatly affected southern literature, to Waldo Braden and Dallas Dickey, who cultivated contemporary southern rhetorical scholarship. These chapters in no way cover all the scholarship on southern discourse. They do, however, focus on the primary scholarly voices shaping southern public address scholarship, those of Dallas Dickey and Waldo Braden, and how these scholars formed an area of study based on attitudes and values of the Southern Agrarian Movement. To show the influences of these scholars and how they created a southern rhetorical scholarship tradition, I will first show the historical connection between literature and public address, then I will discuss the varied contributions of the Vanderbilt Agrarians to southern literature, and I will argue that these links between southern literature and southern public address greatly shaped the study of southern oratory.

2.1 Historical Development

2.1.1 Connection between Literature and Public Address

Many of the basic questions facing southern public address started during the formation and development of the study of public address and rhetoric in general. How the discipline was formed and the key issues defining the area of rhetoric affected the perception and evolution of southern rhetoric as well, specifically the issues of canon development and theoretical perspectives coming from the "mother discipline" of English.

While the connection between literature and early public address scholarship shows the derivative nature of public address, the result of this connection is a parallel derivative relationship between southern literature and southern public address. This connection demonstrates that southern public address has an ideological dependency on the works of the Vanderbilt Agrarians. Due to the derivative nature of literature and public address, the huge influence of the Southern Agrarians and their definitions of southern culture and southern literature impacted the vision and direction of early southern public address scholars.

2.1.2 Early Development of Speech Communication

Speech communication is a derivative discipline. Herman Cohen established this argument in his book *The History of Speech Communication.* In an effort to briefly explain Cohen's view I will summarize the basic history for the purposes of the general field's connection to southern rhetoric. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century public speaking was predominately taught in English departments through elocution studies. A tension between the areas of performance-based elocution (Oral English) and text-based composition emerged. Tired of being treated as inferior, professors of public speaking grew unsettled with their connection to their English colleagues, and in 1914 James O'Neil put forth the recommendation that teachers of Public Speaking separate from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and form their own association.[3] Seventeen members of NCTE emerged to found a new association named the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking.[4]

[3] Herman Cohen, *The History of Speech Communication: the Emergence of a Discipline 1914-1945 (*Annandale: Speech Communication Association Press, 1994), 30-31.
[4] Further information on these seventeen founding members may be found in Andrew Weaver's "Seventeen Who Made History," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 45 (1959): 195-199.

The organization went through several name changes as it developed and emerged to what is now referred to as the National Communication Association. In this way then, speech communication became a discipline, one whose roots stemmed back to ancient Greece, but several hundreds of years later had ended up taught as Oral English in English departments. Once the division from English took place, members realized that publication was essential for speech to stand on its own: "Almost immediately it became clear to the members that they had no research tradition at all and that they must quickly define for themselves what kind of research was appropriate and how they should undertake their work."[5] The problem of where to begin led scholars to borrow and utilize theoretical and methodological ideas from other established disciplines: "The solution to the problem, as seen by early advocates of research, was to emulate the work of those already respected in the academic world."[6] With this directive in mind scholars called for research that imitated other disciplines and, therefore, advanced a derivative discipline with roots across the academy.

As public address scholars developed research agendas and worked on publication efforts, a discipline emerged. Scholars discussed such salient issues as the role of debate in democracy, ethics in persuasion, the scope and conduct of rhetorical theory, and the development of rhetorical criticism. In the midst of these various discussions Herbert Wichelns wrote a highly influential article that would set the pace for public address studies, and thus for southern public address. His essay "The Literary Criticism of Oratory" provided criteria for analyzing and judging oral discourse.[7] The article, among

[5] Cohen, *History*, 36.
[6] Ibid., 38.
[7] Herbert A. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," in *Studies in Rhetoric and Public Speaking in Honor of James Albert Winans*, ed. Alexander Drummond, (New York: Century, 1925).

other works, basically set forth what would later be termed neo-Aristotelian analysis as the standard for critiquing public speech.[8] This approach relied heavily on classical rhetorical theory from the writings of Aristotle and Cicero.

Two of the criteria outlined by Wichelns are important to mention. The first is his emphasis on "effect." The singular focus on the effect a speech had on its audience as the primary end for criticism created a long-term influence on how criticism was done in the discipline. As Cohen explains, "Concentrating so strongly on the effect of rhetorical discourse resulted in a focus which was external and which gave insufficient attention to how a particular piece of rhetoric worked rather than on its immediate or delayed effect. As scholars discovered, determination of effect was both difficult and conjectural."[9] For many years scholars used a neo-Aristotelian approach to rhetorical criticism resulting in highly biographical and historical analysis.

Wichelns second stipulation limited what he considered "oratory." His article claims the written discourse should remain in literary criticism while spoken discourse the work of rhetorical criticism. Ironically scholars predominantly analyzed preserved written texts of speeches. Wichelns' claim ignores other forms of discourse that would later fall under rhetorical analysis. His stipulation highly influenced the public address canon for many years and represents a foundational discourse that perhaps slowed progress on analyzing less mainstream discourse by minority groups that were refused either the podium or textual preservation.

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[8] Some of the other works weighing in the discussion include D. Nichols Smith, *Functions of Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909); H.H. Hudson, "The Field of Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 9 (1923): 167-180 and "Rhetoric and Poetry," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 10 (1924): 143-154; Ernest J. Wrage, "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 33 (1947): 451-457; and Wayland Maxfield Parrish, "The Study of Speeches" in *American Speeches*, ed. Wayland Maxfield Parrish and Marie Hochmuth, (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954).

Both of these stipulations not only affected the direction of public address studies at its foundation, but also directly predisposed the work on southern oratory, which suffered greatly from both the focus on neo-Aristotelian analysis and a limited canon. Neither problem in southern oratory has been rectified, and both remain issues still.

Wichelns, however, hardly deserves all the blame, or praise, for the shape of rhetorical criticism during its early stages. Although his essay was written in 1925, for years later other scholars continued contributions to the blurry lines defining the job of rhetorical critic. In 1933 W. N. Brigance wrote an essay calling for a clearer distinction between the work of literary critics and rhetorical critics.[10] He argued the way to gain this divide was to align rhetorical criticism with historical methodology. Critics would analyze speeches based on the historical issues, the speaker's style, delivery, and of course like Wichelns before, the speech's effect. Brigance furthers the drive toward neo-Aristotelian method and consistently entrenches the canonical and methodological problems established by Wichelns earlier.

This trend in public address continues as a predominant attitude toward rhetorical scholarship until a call was made to move away from neo-Aristotelian method and work for more diverse methods of analysis. Edwin Black is typically given credit for making this call in his 1965 book *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*.[11] Black's essay paved the way for more variety in criticism influencing other critics to take advantage of less "historically based" criticism for more diversity in "texts" and analysis.

Subject matter in rhetorical criticism likewise began to diversify. The 1960s and 1970s brought social movements, protests, and other rhetorical situations to the attention

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[9] Cohen, *History*, 163.
[10] W.N. Brigance, "Whither Research?" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 19 (1933): 552-561.

of scholars. While speeches and public letters were still considered the foundation of rhetorical criticism, scholarship widened the field. The political situations of the times also called for different critical strategies to analyze the rhetoric of our nation and world. War protests, political scandal, the women's movement, and civil rights butted heads with traditional approaches to criticism. Scholarly attention became less concentrated on speeches, essays, and public letters and moved in different, more contemporary, directions.

This shift of attention, however, was not permanent. In 1988 Stephen Lucas claimed the "renaissance" for public address. In his essay "The Renaissance of American Public Address: Text and Context in Rhetorical Criticism," Lucas argued: "The study of American public address is in the midst of a remarkable renaissance. Widely perceived a decade ago as in serious decline, it is stronger today than ever before."[12] Lucas credits Ronald Reagan with bringing attention from the streets of protest back to the podium of public address. Lucas does, however, acknowledge that criticism looks different in its renaissance. Feminist, Marxist, and critical cultural critiques drastically changed the scope of public address scholarship. Along with the critical perspectives, the canon looks different too. Women suffragists, African American speakers, Latino/a orators, and grassroots activists are just a few examples of the canonical diversity shaping public address's new look. Lucas would probably still consider public address studies as constantly evolving and renewing interest, but while public address studies were enjoying a renaissance in general at least one area was left behind – southern public address and rhetoric.

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[11] Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965).
[12] Lucas, "The Renaissance of American Public Address," 260.

The South and its oratory drew scholars' attention early in the formation of the discipline. In fact one of the first examples of analysis published in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* was an essay written in 1920 on Henry Grady by Chas. F. Lindsley. Although the orator is never characterized as creating "southern oratory," he is identified as a southerner and comments are made regarding his attitudes and their roots in southern culture.[13] In 1922 Charles A. Fritz recognizes several southerners in his ambitious essay tracing major periods of the history of oratory.[14] As Fritz discusses the periods of American oratorical development he mentions southerners Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, and John Rutledge and later lists John Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Charles Sumner as great American orators. Much like Lindsley, Fritz does not discuss these orator's distinction of southern qualities; instead they are listed as great historical American orators having characteristics of great speakers.

A book review in the early days of the discipline gives insight into the recognition of African American speakers, some of which were either born in the southern states or had southern roots. Russell H. Wagner's review of *Negro Orators and Their Orations* by Carter G. Woodson indicates a growing awareness by some of the role African Americans played in both the nation's history and America's oratorical development.[15] Speakers such as Booker T. Washington and Frederic Douglas are mentioned as examples in the book. Evidenced from excerpts quoted in the book, many of the speakers spoke out against slavery, mentioning their own experiences. A logical conclusion to be made is that some of these former slaves probably came from southern farms or

[13] Lindsley, "Henry Woodfin Grady, Orator," 41.
[14] Fritz, "A Brief Review of the Chief Periods in the History of Oratory," 49.
[15] Russell H. Wagner, "Negro Orators and Their Orations," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 12 (1926): 379-382.

plantations. Since Wagner's contribution is a book review, its significance is its inclusion in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* in 1926. There is, however, a difference between a review and an actual analysis of an African American public address, which up to this time the journal had not included.

While scholars were very much aware of southern orators and readily included white orators in the canon, those listed were discussed as American orators, not specifically as southerners using a unique southern oratorical style. Important to point out is the fact that at this time the *QJSE* and the National Association of Academic Teacher's of Public Speech that published it were primarily made up of Northeastern and Big Ten schools. The authors of the articles just mentioned were at school in Minnesota, Massachusetts, and New York. In the 1920s South a culture war was beginning to emerge over southern identity that would greatly shape how southerners viewed themselves and how the rest of the nation observed them. Consequently, southern rhetorical scholars' awareness of an identity separate from the rest of the nation based on cultural differences began to take root. This development would see its most obvious effects in the works of literary critics of the Agrarian movement and LSU professor Dallas Dickey.

2.1.3 Early Development of Southern Rhetoric and Public Address

While rhetoric and public address developed as a discipline separate from its English cognate, the area of southern rhetoric was drawing attention from the fields of English and history. Rhetorical scholar Waldo Braden and his students have clearly established the link between the development of southern rhetoric, southern literature, and the concept of "southerness" through anthologies. Braden himself shows a firm

interconnection of southern rhetoric and southern literature in his essays on the emergence of southern oratory.[16] He argues that southern oratory began as part of an effort by southern literary anthologists to develop a systematic preservation of southern literature just prior to the Civil War. These anthologists included southern oratory in their collections of prose, poetry, and essays. Questioning the birth of such a phrase as "southern oratory," Braden states, "My judgment told me that the phrase must have come into usage when southern consciousness emerged and when southerners began to sense feelings of inferiority in intellectual pursuits."[17] His instincts proved correct. "Southern" oratory gained recognition around the 1850s, although some historians seem reluctant to put a definite date on the origin of "southern-ness" as a distinctive culture.[18] Braden, however, identifies an important connection between feelings of intellectual inferiority and the conscious development of a distinctly southern cultural identity. Braden's tracing of anthologies helps scholars understand the lineage of southern public address as it developed as a canon. However, another more subtle aspect in the evolution of southern oratory is the political and theoretical grounding advanced through the studies on southern rhetoric.

Just as Braden searched for the emergence of southern oratory, I wish to establish the theoretical grounding of Dallas Dickey, Waldo Braden, Stuart Towns and others who analyzed and defined southern rhetoric in specific ways**.** Just as Braden and Dickey used rhetorical criticism to examine southern speakers and their speeches, I intend to perform a meta-critical analysis on the works of Dickey and Braden and their followers. Studies of

[16] Braden, "Emergence," 174; and "Southern Oratory Reconsidered," 315.
[17] Braden, "Emergence," 174.
[18] Braden cites his research as far from exhaustive and suggests the various usage of the terms associated with southern oratory may have certainly been used prior to the mid 1800s in "Emergence," 175.

southern oratory by southern scholars emerged from a purposeful development of a southern oratorical canon and from southern rhetorical scholars' reactions to southern literary and historical canons. The work of southern oratorical scholars to define, canonize, and preserve southern orators is politically motivated by the desire to protect and validate a "southern culture." The key question is which "southern culture" has been maintained.

Southern literary critics and scholars have postulated a similar theory about southern literature. Scholars Lewis Simpson, Michael Kreyling, and Jill Leroy-Frazier have all argued that the invention of a "southern" literature developed from specific political and philosophical views held by southern authors and the southern literary critics who analyzed and canonized them. Because Waldo Braden has shown southern oratory's direct canonical and historical connection to southern literature, scholars of rhetoric must question from a meta-critical vantage point the driving political force behind the development of southern oratory and rhetoric. By identifying and defining southern oratorical touchstones from their relationship in southern literary history, southern oratory scholars have limited the "genre" to issues surrounding the Civil War and slavery (or race and civil rights). In particular the "voice" of the southern orator is judged according to its connection to the patriarchal figure of the white male plantation owner and the slavery that helped him gain and eventually lose such a position.

The nature of public address as derivative from English and the specific interrelationship between southern literature and southern public address indicates a lingering dependency. Such connections between anthologies, scholarship, and canons naturally lead to the question as to how this relationship may have affected the definition

and development of southern public address. While Waldo Braden made advances in tracing the history of southern oratory, my concern lies in the formation of ideology through definitions of "southern" handed down from southern literature studies. In order to answer such questions a look at one of the most influential groups on southern studies and southern literature in particular is required. This group of twelve men forms the Vanderbilt Agrarians.

2.2 The Southern Agrarians

The connection between southern literature and southern oratory and the prevailing definitions that associate the genres with pervasive whiteness and patriarchy are found in the contemporary discussions of the Southern Agrarians and their counterparts. Because a southern oratorical canon emerged as southern literature was anthologized, southern literary scholars greatly influenced the perception of southern public address. The same philosophy that promoted the development, preservation, and discussion of southern literary studies also contributed to the development and study of southern oratory. To better understand this relationship between southern literature, southern oratory and the history of scholarship of both, one needs to start where scholars of either oratory or literature are aware of their own political and/or philosophical motivations in reference to their area of study. The key to this discussion lies in a group called the Nashville, or Vanderbilt, Agrarians. The narrow definition of "southern" correlating masculinity, whiteness, and southern rhetoric limits the southern oratorical canon as well as the cultural composition of what is considered southern by restricting whose voices may represent "The South." This definition was highly advanced by the efforts of the Vanderbilt Agrarians. To develop this argument I will analyze the

establishment of the Agrarians as the advocates of a specific southern culture with a particular political and canonical viewpoint by demonstrating that their motivations for influencing southern culture were clearly political and ideological. In turn the Agrarians' ideological leanings affected the foundation of southern public address studies as handed down amongst scholars. The Southern Agrarians managed this by first acting as southern cultural advocates during the 1920s and 1930s; second they developed and passed on a southern philosophy with roots in patriarchy, whiteness, and racism; and finally within their understanding of culture exists a "historical consciousness" that helped define southern literature and influenced southern public address as being steeped with "the past in the present." All these factors predisposed the direction and development of southern public address studies in ways still greatly affecting its scholarship today.

2.2.1 The Agrarians as Advocates

While southern literature dates back to the first pamphlets advertising the settlement of Jamestown, not until the early 1900s was clear and deliberate development of southern literature, awareness of southern culture, and movement toward a southern literary canon articulated in writing. Southern literary scholars give the Nashville Agrarians credit for creating a vision of the South that greatly contributed to the conscious invention and development of southern literature and attendant definitions of southern culture.[19] The Nashville, or Vanderbilt, Agrarians (also referred to as Neo-Confederates and The Twelve) were a group of twelve southern scholars primarily influenced by work taking place at Vanderbilt University under the leadership of former

[19] Several scholars discuss the connection of the Agrarians to southern literature; however, Michael Kreyling and Jill Leroy Frazier give them specific roles in shaping the definition of southern literature. Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*, 3-18; and Jill Leroy-Frazier, "Exploding the Southern Text:

Fugitives John Crowe Ransom and Donald Davidson.[20] Only seven of the contributors were writers and literary scholars: Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, John Gould Fletcher, Stark Young and Andrew Lytle. Other essayists included historian Frank Owsley, psychologist Lyle Lanier, political scientist H.C. Nixon, biographer John Donald Wade, and journalist Henry Blue Kline.[21] Tate, Donaldson, and Ransom, espousing the Agrarian philosophy, worked to create a symposium concerning the influence of industry on the "southern way of life." Their well-known book *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* acted as a Southern Agrarian manifesto, defending a traditional culture with an agricultural economic base threatened by a modern urban-industrial society."[22]

The Southern Agrarians are essential to the study of southern rhetoric, for their ideas influenced southern rhetorical scholarship. To understand how this impact still manifests itself within southern oratorical critiques, two characteristics are important: the motivations behind their defense of the South and their philosophic response to criticism of the South, which features their ideas of historical consciousness and mythical analysis. While all these characteristics are important, the Agrarians cannot fully be understood without a clear idea of their motivations in writing *I'll Take My Stand*. Three specific motivations are important in the later development and influence of southern rhetoric and public address: 1) their grave reaction to H.L. Mencken's "Sahara of the Bozart"; 2) their disillusionment with the Tennessee Scopes Trial; and 3) the resulting culture war of

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Reconsidering Southern Literature as a Critically Constructed Genre" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1998), 1-44.

[20] The Fugitives were a group of poets that met in Nashville during the early 1920s. They also published and wrote essays for their own publication, *The Fugitive.*

[21] George B. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U P, 1967), 577.

which they found themselves a part. Insight into these characteristics clarifies why the Agrarians and their philosophy remain prevalent influences behind much of southern rhetorical scholarship.

Within southern literary circles, the precise influence the Agrarians had on the field remains hotly debated and discussed. The many scholarly studies of The Twelve attest to the importance to southern literature and southern cultural studies. Michael Kreyling gives the Agrarians credit for inventing the foundations for southern literature and its consequent canon.[23] Literary critic Louis D. Rubin Jr. recognizes the Agrarians as having a prophetic view of the dangers of urbanization and industry and also gives some of the twelve acknowledgment for envisioning a southern literature and southern identity.[24] Thomas Daniel Young describes the attitudes inspiring *I'll Take My Stand* as having "had a profound influence upon Southern thought."[25] Contemporary scholar Richard Gray cites the Agrarians as challenging and re-inventing past southern mythology for use in their own times: "Of all the Southern writers who responded to the challenge of the times none did so with more calculation and aggression than the Nashville Agrarians."[26] Indeed, many discussions of southern literature include and/or start with the Agrarians, yet no one acknowledges or questions the influence of the Agrarians on the invention and formation of southern oratorical scholarship or the construction of the oratorical canon. In fact scholars such as Dickey and Braden, most

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[22] William C. Harvard, "Agrarians, Vanderbilt," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture,* ed. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris (Chapel Hill: U North Carolina P, 1989).
[23] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*, 3-32.
[24] Introduction, *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1977), xi-xx.
[25] Thomas Daniel Young, *Waking Their Neighbors Up: The Nashville Agrarians Rediscovered* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1982), xi.
[26] Richard Gray, *Writing the South: Ideas of an American Region*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 125.

often cited as the primary inventors of southern oratorical studies, give no credit to the Agrarians for their own ideas on identifying oratory as southern or what that identification means.

The Nashville Agrarians, however, greatly influenced the call for and development of studies in southern rhetoric. The overwhelming political and cultural nature of their 1930 symposium addressed many areas of southern culture that greatly affected how scholars viewed and perceived southern rhetoric. The Agrarians are also important to southern oratorical scholarship because southern oratorical canons began in the anthologies of southern literature. Therefore, examining highly influential southern literary scholars such as the Agrarians, who came on the scene seventeen years before Dickey's call, illuminates the history of the southern rhetorical canon and helps us better comprehend its current status today.

To understand the Agrarian's impact on southern oratory, one must contemplate their motivations for writing *I'll Take My Stand* and its consequent discussions. Three basic elements motivated the Twelve to argue for an agrarian South: H.L. Mencken's attacks on southern culture, the depiction of southerners during the Scopes trial, and the South's move toward an industrial society. In the late 1920s when "things southern" were under attack, the question "what does it mean to be southern?" became difficult to answer. As a result the unapologetic Agrarian manifesto argued the value for "the southern way of life." *I'll Take My Stand* started as a response to attacks by reporter H. L. Mencken who wrote that the South was the "Sahara of the Bozart" or a cultural desert. Writing in 1920, Mencken critiqued anything to "expose false pretense," and the South's attempts to recover and create cultural dignity and "new South prosperity" gave Mencken

much to "expose." The "Bozart" article claims the South fell from its once elevated state as a seat of civilization to a place "almost as sterile, artistically, intellectually, culturally, as the Sahara Desert."[27] After a rather lengthy diatribe about the failings of southern music, poetry, drama, architecture, painting, sculpture, and scholarship, Mencken explains the "paucity of the *beaux arts*: 'The South has simply been drained of all its best blood,' and the 'poor white trash,' infused with the moral fervor of Puritanism and its hostility toward the arts, had gained control."[28] Mencken's articles drew attention to an already self-conscious South.

If Mencken's South-bashing in "The Sahara of the Bozart" was enough to raise the ire of some southerners, his nationally publicized sarcasm during the 1925 Scopes trial added fuel to a cultural debate fire. The second motivation for writing the book occurred amidst a nationwide fundamentalist rejection of evolution spurred by the Scopes trial.[29] The publicity brought to both Dayton, Tennessee and the South during the "Monkey Trial" played neatly into the hands of Mencken. His scathing articles made fun of southerners' religious fanaticism, poverty, and lack of education. As a result of his critical humor, Mencken's popularity grew, but many of "The Twelve" found little to

[27] H.L. Mencken, "The Sahara of the Bozart," in *Prejudices, Second Series* (New York, 1920), 136, quoted in Fred C. Hobson, Jr. in *Serpent in Eden: H.L. Menken and the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 14.
[28] Quoted in Hobson, *Serpent in Eden*, 15.
[29] Moved to take a stand, Tennessee legislator John Washington Butler "introduced a bill to outlaw the teaching of evolution in public schools and colleges." The bill passed with little opposition and was signed into law by the Tennessee Governor. Appalled by the new law, the American Civil Liberties Union asked an unknown high school teacher, John Scopes, to participate in a test case on the new law. Scopes accepted. The case resulted in the famous trial pitting prosecutor William Jennings Bryan against Scopes' defender Clarence Darrow. The trial climaxed when Darrow called Bryan to the stand as a witness for the defense. Bryan, questioned as a Biblical expert, entrapped himself with his literal interpretation of biblical verses and was humiliated. Nevertheless, Scopes was found guilty and fined. The Tennessee Supreme Court later overturned the decision based on a technicality.

laugh about and, consequently, were motivated to defend the South by writing *I'll Take My Stand*.[30]

Finally, while Mencken's reflections may have helped motivate the initial words of the book, the reality of the South's move to industry and progress gave the Nashville Agrarians another reason to engage in a fierce culture war. As the South strove to develop itself after Reconstruction, New South advocates, such as Henry Grady, proposed using northern businesses and financial clout to rebuild the southern economy. The Agrarians feared these northern businesses would bring an extremely capitalistic and scientific philosophy resulting in the destruction of spiritual and societal benefits of southern culture. The intellectual elite, especially the literary elite, recognized that industrialization worshipped science, creating a culture with little time for poetry and novels. The advent of such a culture had little to offer university professors making up the Vanderbilt Agrarians. The threat was not only a shift in the South's cultural direction, but a disempowerment of its academic elite. Literary critic Michael Kreyling supports this argument: "Perhaps it is not so much 'the South' that triggered *I'll Take My Stand* as the presence in the cultural/historical arena of competing 'orders' of cultural power that threatened to imagine the South in other ways that would have disenfranchised the Agrarian elite. And they fought back." The New South business interests meant to profit a new group of southern businessmen as well as northern migrators.[31] The building of "mill towns" threatened to take control of the poor from the large farm owner, signifying

[30]Further discussion of Mencken's role in motivating Donaldson, Tate, and Ransom is provided by Hobson in *Serpent in Eden*. Hobson devotes a chapter to the frustration Menken instigated in the Agrarians. Hobson goes as far as suggesting that Davidson, Ransom, and Tate were not of the Agrarian philosophy prior to the Dayton, TN trial. He claims the Scopes trial and its coverage was the driving force behind the book (150-151).

[31] Discussion of the economic ramifications of mill towns and industry may be found in Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), 104-131.

agrarian beliefs, to the factory manager and owner, representing the industrial/scientific ideals.[32] A small but steady middle class emerged, threatening the economic status of large landowners and poor whites and blacks who worked their land under a paternal tenant and sharecropping system. Meanwhile, African Americans had continued a trend of migrating into northern cities, leaving upper-class southern families who made their way as planters and farmers fighting with big industry for labor.[33] As the Agrarians viewed these changes, they came to the conclusion that industry and science threatened their former way of life.

2.2.2 The Agrarian Response and Philosophy

Incensed at Mencken's condescension towards the South, frustrated over the negative attention from the Scopes trial, and fearful of the effect industry was having on the South, Ransom, Donaldson, and Tate gathered recruits to defend the southern way of life, or at least the Agrarian version of it. As critic Michael Kreyling asserts, "Snide hostility to Mencken's tirade in 'Sahara of the Bozart' in 1917 had metamorphosed by 1930 into a formidable and systematized intellectual and cultural counterattack."[34]

Following the Scopes trial and the media coverage surrounding it, the Agrarians found themselves observing a South presented to the rest of the nation as marginalized "other." Southern culture including its religion, education, art, and people had been under attack in a manner unlike any previous war. Mencken and those like him presented

[32] C. Vann Woodward discusses the paternal nature of the mill towns that greatly parallels the paternalism found in sharecropping. Workers were completely dependent on mill owners for every basic need. C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South 1877-1913,* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 223-226.
[33] The greatest part of black emigration took place immediately after Reconstruction; however, farmers and planters felt the effects of the migration for many years. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South,* 150-151.
[34] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature,* 10.

the South as "other," a second rate region void of any redeeming feature; therefore, the South, a nuisance to its northeast countrymen, must apologize and change.

The Agrarians are significant because they refused to bend to northern dictates. Through their critiques of economics, education, and religion, they gave other southerners both something to think about, a defense of their southern values and a feeling of unabashed and unashamed pride. No other group or individual of southern descent came to the altar of debate so unapologetic.

Their essays in *I'll Take My Stand* and elsewhere gravitated to the pride of a "defeated region" while also shaping the future of literature within the South. The Agrarians wrote to acknowledge what was "other" about the South and thus to redeem its values and culture in the eyes of the rest of their northern counterparts. In so doing they inspired others to not only feel good about being southern, but also to add to the cultural arts within the South. Simply put, the Agrarians helped southerners identify who they were and how they could feel good about being themselves. Their ideas not only influenced their time period, they also greatly impacted the future of southern literature and southern oratory.

Two clear concepts affected the development of southern oratory – the agrarian philosophy and its defining of "southern culture" and historical consciousness and its use of myth. While the Agrarians were clearly motivated by those who denounced the South, their response to those attacks spurred a full fledged philosophy that significantly influenced views of southern culture – including the development of southern oratory and rhetoric. There are three basic strategic elements utilized by the Agrarians in publicizing their philosophy. First the Agrarians were cultural critics who were politically motivated.

Their philosophy differs from current day cultural critics such as historian Eugene Genovese in that they were not Marxist but were still conservative.[35] Second, the Twelve saw their work in *I'll Take My Stand* as a political activity written to intervene in how people viewed the South and its future. In short they worked as interventionists. Third, their work and philosophy focused on giving texture and meaning to the daily and common life of southerners.

Due to the significant impact on southern culture, the Vanderbilt Agrarian philosophy deserves some discussion. As critics denounced the South as other, the Agrarians looked for a way to counter attack through cultural redemption of "southern values." Four clear characteristics are important as they relate to the development of southern oratory. The first is their concept of the South as a rural, leisure, and spiritual culture. The second involves their defining of the South as a white patriarchal culture. Next the Agrarians, specifically Allen Tate, rely on "historical consciousness" as a way to define southern psychology and culture. Finally, the method used to communicate these three previously mentioned characteristics is the use of myth.

To understand the Southern Agrarian philosophy and its effect on southern oratory, one must first recognize the Agrarian's conceptualization of the South as a rural culture. The Twelve argued southern values came through their basic philosophy of "Agrarian vs. Industrial," a concept rooted in the spirituality of rural life.[36] They define Agrarian as a perspective that "the culture of the soil is the best and most sensitive of vocations, and that therefore it should have the economic preference and enlist the

[35]Historian Eugene Genovese is well known not only for his scholarship in southern history, but also for an ideological shift he made from "liberal" to "conservative" stemming from his Marxist roots. His more conservative philosophy and interpretations of southern culture can be seen in his book. *The Southern*

maximum number of workers."[37] The Agrarian works to enjoy the fruits of his labor as well as to intellectually stimulate himself, developing a type of *leisurely* living of "artful work pursued for humane ends at a leisurely pace without the discipline of bosses or time clocks."[38] In contrast, industrialization is never satiated by work, material possessions, or product. Instead it demands more to the extent that it exposes "us to slavery when pursued without critical intelligence."[39] The Twelve realized the South would need some industrialization. They maintained, however, that it be done with "all moderation" without the "dehumanization" of the southern worker and replacing agrarian virtues with greed, faithlessness, and materialism.[40]

Although the Agrarians articulated concerns over the spiritual welfare and cultivation of the South, their troubled views of race, diversity, and hierarchy establish foundations crucial to understanding southern culture during their time. In the discussion of hierarchy the authors seem unsure of how to formulate a new power structure within the parameters of a rural southern philosophy. John Crowe Ransom talks of

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Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

[36] Twelve Southerners, "Introduction," *I'll Take My Stand*, xxxvii.

[37] Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand*, xlvii.

[38] Paul Conkin, "The South in Southern Agrarianism," in *The Evolution of Southern Culture*, ed. Numan V. Bartley, (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1988), 134. Agrarian lifestyle appealed to the leisure and spiritual side of the Twelve. Leisure, as referred to by Ransom, does not mean idleness, laziness or self-indulgence. He is referring to an attitude found within the South: "The South never conceded that the whole duty of man was to increase material production or that the index to the degree of his culture was the volume of this material production. His business seemed to be rather to envelop both his work and his play with a leisure which permitted the activity of intelligence." Ransom regards leisure as one essential difference between Agrarian and Industrial lifestyle. See Ransom, "Reconstructed but Unregenerate," *I'll Take My Stand*, 12.

[39] John Crowe Ransom, "Reconstructed but Unregenerate," *I'll Take My Stand*, 10.

[40] George Tindall makes the point that throughout *I'll Take My Stand* the authors define Agrarianism by telling us much more specifically what it is not. The Twelve create several comparisons from which the reader may gather the characteristics of Agrarian thought. For example, leisure is pitted against slavery (or mechanization), religion against science, tradition against progress, spiritualism against greed, European lifestyle (seen in the South) against American capitalism, and nature against industry. Only in the Agrarian lifestyle could, "men find the right relation with nature and cultivate the traditional amenities: personal relations, manners, conversation, hospitality, leisure, and family life breeding culture, art, religion," *The Emergence of the New South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 578.

"squirearchy" as a power structure and Fletcher argued against mass public education.[41] Elsewhere Andrew Nelson Lytle upholds the rights and needs of the common farmer leaving one unclear as to the position of the group on social and economic status.[42] Historian George Tindall agrees: "Their ideal of the traditional virtues took on the texture of myth in the image of the agrarian South, although it never became altogether clear whether the Agrarians were extolling the aristocratic graces or rustic simplicity."

Regardless of whether the Agrarians upheld the yeoman farmer or the aristocratic squire, in their minds neither included southern blacks. The Agrarians' racist viewpoints affected how they saw the South and resulted in a very "white" (or Anglo-centric) view of southern culture. Their views of southern culture then become a part of the cultural "text" of their time period. These viewpoints articulated in the Agrarian's writings both critique their own culture and become markers or texts for future generations to refer to when speaking about the South and its culture. In this way then the Agrarians not only define southern culture and identity – *they create it* to fit their own political and sociological viewpoint. Whether the Agrarians were totally and completely aware of what they were doing at the time is irrelevant when compared to the longevity and notoriety of their works. The significance of their views on the South and what it means to be southern substantiates itself in the canons of southern literature and southern oratory. As scholars of both literature and oratory accept the basic foundations of southern cultural tenets set forth by the Agrarians, minority influences on southern culture are ignored or redefined for the benefit of a white cultural perspective.

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[41] Ransom, "Reconstructed but Unregenerate," 14, and John Gould Fletcher, "Education Past and Present," *I'll Take My Stand*, 93-121.
[42] Andrew Nelson Lytle, "The Hind Tit," *I'll Take My Stand*, 201-245.

The southern identity as described by the Vanderbilt group influenced who could carry the label "southerner." The discrepancy in racial attitudes and the advocacy of an Anglo-based southern culture are noted by historian Paul Conkin: "They revealed little appreciation of how much British and African cultures mixed and merged in the South, of how much blacks influenced southern religion, cuisine, music, and literature. Others such as Davidson, Owsley, and Lytle, not only slighted the black influence but put blacks down by nasty, racist statements."[43] The dismissal of the cultural diversity of the 1920s South plays a key role in how the Agrarians define "southern" culture as white and European based. At best the Agrarians were naive about race relations, at worst they condoned the caste system. At a time when African American lynchings were at an all time high, Ransom speaks of the virtues of the Old South: "Slavery was a feature monstrous enough in theory, but, more often than not, humane in practice; and it is impossible to believe that its abolition alone could have affected any great revolution in society."[44] In the same essay Ransom discusses the South's connection to European lifestyle, but gives little credence to the influence of African, Creole, or Hispanic culture on the South. Therefore, the Agrarian's utopia may have included diverse minorities, but the white European influence was dominant and most pervasive within their view of southern culture.

As the Agrarians debated the values of rural lifestyle and Anglo-based cultural identity they did so through another element important to their philosophy of "historical consciousness," which evolved in their communicated visions of the South. Agrarian Allen Tate first used the term historical consciousness in relation to southern literature.

[43] Paul Conkin, "The South in Southern Agrarianism," 137.
[44] Ransom, "Reconstructed but Unregenerate," 14.

From the standpoint of both critic and author in his essay "The Profession of Letters in the South" written in 1935, Tate describes his generation of southerners as steeped in historical consciousness – aware of "the past in the present." This sense of history colored the Agrarians' views on what it meant to be a southerner in a post Civil War South. Understanding that the loss of the war also meant a loss of control over how the South was depicted and portrayed in popular thought, the Vanderbilt Agrarians set about to change misperceptions of both southern history and the value of southern culture.

While the strategy of historical consciousness is used in *I'll Take My Stand*, the explanation of the term came later in discussions of southern literature. The term and technique is important to southern oratory because of the connection public address has to southern literature. At the time when southern oratory was being studied and anthologized, historical consciousness affected the scholars defining the area. The concept of historical consciousness blended well with the view of public address criticism in the 1930s and 1940s as being historical in nature and neo-Aristotelian in analysis.

Historical consciousness motivated the writers and helped define the southern culture they so wanted to preserve. Vanderbilt Agrarian Allen Tate tried to describe the mindset of the Twelve as they ventured upon their mission: "The Southern novelist has left his mark upon the age; but it is of the age. From the peculiarly historical consciousness of the Southern writer has come good work of a special order; but the focus of the consciousness is quite temporary."[45] The awareness or "historical consciousness" had motivated a generation of critics and novelists to discuss issues about southern identity, history, and culture in an effort to bridge the historical gap between the Old South and the post World War I South. The Vanderbilt Twelve consciously went

about layering interpretations of what occurred in the South in order to preserve a southern viewpoint. According to southern literary critic Lewis Simpson, Tate was defining what distinguished southern literature and southern literary criticism while also prophesying, albeit without intent, that southern literature would face a reckoning in regards to its future and purpose, "Southern literature in the second half of this century may cease to engage the scholarly imagination; the subject may eventually become academic, and buried with the last dissertation."[46] Tate elaborated on his 1935 thoughts in another essay several years later when he gave two definitive reasons for the rise of a specifically *southern* literature in the 1920s through the 1940s.[47] The first is the aforementioned historical consciousness or the "historical factor": "No doubt without this factor, without the social change, the new literature could not have appeared."[48] His belief that a clear historical consciousness and not just the social conditions of the South acted as a motivator for southern writers such as Faulkner and Ransom was clear. They felt the need to make some sense about what had happened to the South and how the South's history affected the present. The way southern writers accomplished this feat was through the use of dialogue as a rhetorical device.

Tate couples the notion of historical consciousness with a second element, the internal dialogue found within the southern writer's characters and within the writer himself. "The action is generated inside the characters: there is internal dialogue, a conflict within the self."[49] Although Tate claims in this essay that the internal dialogue is not "rhetoric," meaning a trivial communication for the purpose of its effect on the

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[45] Found in Allen Tate, *Essays of Four Decades,* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1968), 533-534.
[46] Allen Tate, "A Southern Mode of Imagination," in *Essays of Four Decades*, (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1968), 583. The work was originally published in 1959.
[47] This period is typically referred to by southern literary scholars as the Southern Renaissance.

audience, rhetorical scholars argue dialogue creating an argument, whether with oneself or others, is by its very nature rhetorical.[50] Tate goes on to claim the reason for this internal dialogue was the historical consciousness of a generation: "the South not only reentered the world with the first World War; it looked round and saw for the first time since about 1830 that the Yankees were not to blame for everything."[51] Tate explains the awareness and development of southern literature as an effort stemming from historical consciousness and an internal dialogue to explain the plight and condition of the southerner, the South, and its consequential culture. The result of this internal dialogue was the invention of culture itself. This culture, however, was not without a political agenda. Just as the Agrarians had an agenda or purpose to fight the mindless advance of industry, science and mass production, southern authors such as Faulkner and Ransom were fighting blanket misconceptions of the South and their own complex thoughts on issues of race and gender. This pattern of historical consciousness and internal dialogue would become the decisive distinction used to analyze southern literature for years to come.

This idea of historical consciousness as the distinguishing feature of southern literature advanced in the work on Lewis Simpson and most clearly Louis D. Rubin, Jr. These literary scholars utilized the idea that for southerners the past is ever present, and, therefore worked out in literary works dealing with such issues as race, class, and gender. In contrast southern oratory scholars never quite articulated such a distinction in regard to southern oratory. The concept did, however, affect southern oratorical scholarship.

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[48] Tate, "Southern Mode," 591.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Thomas B. Farrell, *Norms of Rhetorical Culture* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993).
[51] Tate, "Southern Mode," 592.

Dallas Dickey, Waldo Braden, Stuart Towns and others have canonized, discussed, and argued the evidence and merits of "southern rhetoric" as a category. Due to this effect of "historical consciousness" on the work of southern oratory scholars and the questions over whether there currently exists a southern culture, I maintain that the concept of southern rhetoric, much like the South itself, now exists in the stage of what Michael Kreyling labels "postsouthern."`

By the term "postsouthern," Kreyling refers to a South that has come to mean so many things that it actually has lost all meaning. Comparing the word "south" to the word "rose," he points out the overlapping and overuse of the word in reference to metaphors, legends, and significance to the extent that the term is loaded with meaning, which in turn means slightly different things to different people.[52] The Agrarians added layers to the term "South" by historically layering their ideological view of southerness to what already existed. This contributes to the postsouthern time in which southern scholars find themselves today, one in which southern history is multilayered and contextually defined.

2.2.3 The Agrarians and Myth

Understanding the Agrarian philosophy and its components of rural life, white patriarchal culture, and historical consciousness remains incomplete without comprehending that all the previously mentioned elements were communicated through the use of myth. As acknowledged by Tate, the Agrarians were conscious of the past within the present of their South. When the writers went to articulate this concept they did so through the use of myth. Through myth many of the tensions between an Old South history and a twentieth-century reality could be rectified and explained. Scholars

such as W.J. Cash, Charles Reagan Wilson, and Michael O'Brien have identified several ways myth significantly shaped twentieth-century southern culture.[53] Yet historian Gaines Foster points out that myth has an ambiguous nature both in its use and in the scholarship dealing with it: "'Myth' is understood to mean everything from a creative falsehood to a disguised falsehood that publicly presents 'ordinarily unconscious paradoxes.'"[54] While myth may help explain history, and the loss of the South in particular, the symbolic nature of myth makes it ambiguous and individually interpretive in nature. The Agrarians faced many of these same problems when outlining their political and philosophical ideals. Similar problems arise in the analysis and development of southern public address.

The problem for Ransom, Tate, Warren, and other Agrarian literary authors was that their very method for communicating the tension between the past and present suffered attacks by the language and argument of scientific reasoning. Myth, in scientific circles, drew suspicion and criticism. The myths the former Fugitives used in poetry, fiction, and essays lacked credibility against industry and science. The Agrarians were very much aware of this problem. Ransom saw myths in terms of their relationship to science. "Myths are, in his opinion 'construed very simply by the hard Occidental mind: they are lies. It is supposed that everything written in serious prose ought to be historical or scientific . . . . Myths, like fairy tales, like poems, are neither. They are therefore

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[52] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*, 155.
[53] W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1941, 1968); Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1980); and O'Brien, *The Idea of the American South*.
[54] Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (Oxford: Oxford U Press, 1987), 7.

absurd.'"[55] Ransom and Tate shared the opinion that myths were linked to the spiritual nature of humans. Thus, to attack religious myth with science was a strike against that which makes one human. Author Alexander Karanikas discusses the conservative and southern bias of Ransom's thought on myth: "by implication he excluded those myths whose basic 'truth' did not support the conservative tradition that he supported."[56] For example, Ransom opposed the legendary character of Abraham Lincoln and ignored righting the "myth" of the freedom-dreaming slave. He also never addressed the myths surrounding industrialism.

Fellow Agrarian Allen Tate also wrote of the value and need of myth. He maintained the loss of myth would cause the artist a huge "limitation."[57] The myths used by Agrarians advanced a "legendary South," rooted in the past but transformed by history. The Agrarian use of legend and myth defined their political view as well: "The basic conflict arose from the difference between the legendary and the actual in Southern social history. These conflicts of opinion in the twenties and thirties divided the Old from the New, the conservatives from the liberals."[58] Being poets, Ransom and Tate both understood the value of myth to their work and to the religious and political nature of the South. The scientific attack against myth was not just evidence of dueling cultural standards in a fierce culture war; it was the Agrarians' source of communicating their cultural and political beliefs both as poets and critics that, in turn, created a concept of regionalism. The idea that the South cultivated its own unique culture through which its participants gained identity had little validity before the Vanderbilt Agrarians articulated

[55] Ransom's original remarks are found in his own book *God Without Thunder* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930), quoted by Alexander Karanikas in *Tillers of a Myth: Southern Agrarians as Social and Literary Critics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 160-161.
[56] Karanikas, *Tillers of a Myth*, 161.

this vision. According to literary critic Alexander Karanikas, "The Southern Agrarians did more than anyone else to develop the literary aspects of regionalism."[59] Yet the group had more than a literary interest in tilling this ground. While the Agrarians wrote poems and essays critiquing the South and those who would attack it, they also nurtured a culture through their use and discussion of myth. The Agrarians literally, according to Kreyling, "produced the South in the same way that all historically indigenous social elites produce ideological realities: out of strategies for seizing and retaining power (cultural, political, sexual, economic, and so on) that are then reproduced as 'natural.'"[60] Indeed, the Agrarians' use of myth and their discussion of it worked to communicate their own historical consciousness, develop a conservative southern philosophy, and articulate an academic discussion that would become a cultural entity.

I'll Take My Stand looked at southern culture through the eyes of literary critics and cultural observers. As a group, the twelve were not historians; only one of the group claimed that title, yet they were writing about historical events and consequences. What many of the essays accomplished included the consolidation of many southern myths already in effect about the "Lost Cause," the Civil War, racism, and southern culture. While the book was widely critiqued and criticized, scholars hardly dismissed it. The book and its authors, therefore, attained credit for opening a never-ending discussion about the development and preservation of southern culture. Their dependence on literature and myth strategically put them at a disadvantage in a world validating the language and argument of science and industry.

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[57] Ibid., 163.
[58] Ibid., 59.
[59] Ibid., 101.

The Vanderbilt Agrarians formed their philosophy from motivations deriving from derogatory images portrayed by Mencken and others about the South. At the heart of the motivations existed a culture war between not only the rural and industrial, but also between the arts and science. These motivations sparked the response and ideals expressed in *I'll Take My Stand*. The core of these beliefs revolved around a rural lifestyle complicated by a racial hierarchy and kept alive through historical consciousness communicated by myth. The Agrarians left a mark on southern culture that upheld their own cultural and political beliefs. These ideas impacted southern culture, including southern literature and southern rhetorical studies for years to come. In order for the next advancement of conservative southern thought to develop a young rhetorician and essayist would join in the discussion, Richard Weaver.

[60] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*, 6. Kreyling is speaking about ideology here in reference to Louis Althusser's writings. He specifically references Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes toward an Investigation)" in *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1984).

Chapter 3.

Extending the Definitions in Southern Public Address: Richard Weaver, Dallas Dickey and Waldo Braden

> But the debate over Southern identity was not localized in any particular intellectual discipline. It called upon its participants to integrate many issues otherwise broken into special compartments. For the South was deemed to be an organism, and its definition required the integration of facts across time, space, and social divisions. . . The lines were very long and exposed. All too often they broke.
>
> Michael O'Brien
> *The Idea of the American South,* 1979[1]

The significance of defining and claiming the concepts such as "South" and "southern" remained important after the initial arguments of the Vanderbilt Agrarians. While they worked to fight the New South politics and replace it with rural-based values others in other disciplines needed to follow their lead and advance on the ideas the Agrarians set forth in southern literature. Soon aspects of the Twelve's writings, such as a defensive voice bound to the burden of southern history (historical consciousness), analysis tied and rooted in myth, and the desire to preserve a particular southern literature and rhetoric emerged in various ways from those who came after the legendary former Fugitives. This chapter will continue the genealogy begun in chapter two by looking at three scholars who evolved the ideas of the Agrarians from southern literature to southern rhetoric. To argue the concepts more broadly took the talents and understanding of Richard Weaver who helped solidify the definition of a southern culture tradition. Weaver built a bridge between the two areas of literature and rhetoric that helped design a cultural template upon which others would expand. Southern rhetoric developed within

[1] O'Brien, *The Idea of the American South,* 222.

this tradition through the concentrated efforts of two Louisiana State University rhetorical scholars, Dallas Dickey and Waldo Braden.

In the pages that follow, I will examine the contributions of Richard Weaver, Dallas Dickey, and Waldo Braden in an effort to show how each contributed to the southern rhetorical tradition, and to highlight the problematic ideology associated with this tradition. Such an analysis reveals the problems of current southern public address and rhetorical analysis.

3.1 Richard Weaver

Scholars in various disciplines have often discussed Richard Weaver's political and scholarly connections to the Vanderbilt Agrarians.[2] As a young man from Weaverville, North Carolina, Weaver attended the University of Kentucky for his BA and Vanderbilt University for his MA where he met his mentor John Crowe Ransom. Of all the Agrarians, Ransom had the biggest impact on Weaver through his views on myth and religion. After receiving his Master's degree, Weaver went on to Louisiana State University for a doctorate from the English Department. In Baton Rouge Weaver worked with Agrarian Robert Penn Warren and Agrarian sympathizer Cleanth Brooks. Brooks advised Weaver on his dissertation, which would be published posthumously in 1968 as *The Southern Tradition at Bay*. While Brooks advised the finished product, Weaver's initial advisor was literary historian Arlin Turner. Turner advised most of the dissertation until he left LSU to take a position at Duke University; Weaver then chose Brooks as his

[2] For more detail on Weaver's associations with the Fugitive/Agrarian movement see M.E. Bradford, "The Agrarianism of Richard Weaver: Beginnings and Completions," in *The Vision of Richard Weaver*, ed. Joseph Scotchie (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 133-144; and Fred Douglas Young, *Richard M. Weaver 1910-1963: A Life of the Mind* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995).

dissertation advisor.[3] This shift of advisor is important because Weaver gained a vast knowledge of literary history on Turner's watch.[4] This concentration would help Weaver advance his sympathies in a direction not yet pursued by Ransom and his group. Weaver himself gives his time at LSU credit for directing his thinking on the South more specifically.[5] As Weaver started his scholarly career he did so as the son of the southern Agrarian movement.

Scholars also recognize Weaver's contributions to the area of southern literature and southern studies. Literary critic Michael Kreyling gives Weaver distinct credit for taking the Southern Agrarian philosophy and developing a southern literary history based on traditional conservative idealism and Agrarian southern values. Kreyling describes Weaver's direct argument aimed at the "local political and ideological opponent" as intended to motivate the "conservative, white, heterosexual, male South" who considered themselves a "cultural elite." This South was having an increasingly difficult time explaining "who we are." As Kreyling points out, "their 'we' was under attack from within and without by minorities previously excluded, and the 'are' was shifting tenses with disturbingly intractable acceleration into the past." [6] Weaver became a savior to the southerners attracted to the Agrarian South. Weaver is also thought to have influenced

[3] Young, *Weaver*, 67.
[4] In this context and throughout I am using the term literary history to mean the intrinsic rather than the extrinsic analysis of literary history. One obvious definition of the term is as an evaluation of various literary genres either through history or within a particular chronological period (extrinsic). The term also refers to the critical analysis of literature not as a self-contained entity, but as writings in relation to a series of historical events (intrinsic). A literary historian looks for the historical forces upon literary texts to determine why a text turned out to be what it is. For further specifics see Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin ed., *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 250-262.
[5] Richard M. Weaver, "Up From Liberalism," in Scotchie, *The Vision of Richard Weaver*, 19-36.
[6] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*, 28.

southern historian C. Vann Woodward, whose discussions of southern history and its irony was "anticipated by Weaver in his commentaries on Civil War."[7]

While Kreyling credits Weaver with helping define southern literature and others claim he influenced southern historical studies, scholars have yet to discuss his contribution to southern rhetoric. Weaver's biggest acknowledgement in rhetorical studies was just that – his ideas on rhetoric. Ralph Eubanks maintains Weaver was most studied for his ethical ideas and his discussions on argument.[8] While Weaver contributed greatly to our understanding of these issues, important questions remain about his influence on the particular field of southern rhetoric and public address, a field for which Weaver was closely connected to southern history and culture. Indeed, as the work of Eubanks, Johannesen, McGee, and others illustrates, Weaver is known more for his contributions to argument and ethics than for his analysis of southern oratory and modes of speech.[9] This is unfortunate, since, as rhetorical scholar Rebecca Watts Bridges points out, the rhetorical strategies Weaver identified for re-establishing social order were derived from his understanding of southern history.[10] Yet scholars from other areas of

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[7] George Core, "Introduction" in *The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver*, ed. George M. Curtis III and James J. Thompson Jr., (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), xi-xii. Also see Woodward, "Irony or Southern History," *The Burden of Southern History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1970): 187-212.

[8] This specific information was gained from Dr. Eubanks in a phone conversation in October 2004. Eubanks is the co-editor of *Language is Sermonic: Richard M. Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1970). His fellow editors include Richard L. Johannesen and Rennard Strickland.

Several essays have been written on Weaver's contributions to rhetoric and ethics without concern over the southern roots of these ideas. Here are a few examples: Richard L. Johannesen, "Richard Weaver's View of Rhetoric and Criticism," *Southern Speech Journal* 32 (1966): 133-146; Robert E. Haskell and Gerard A. Hauser, "Rhetorical Structure: Truth and Method in Weaver's Epistemology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 64 (1978): 233-246; Sharon Crowley, "When Ideology Motives Theory: The Case of the Man from Weaverville," *Rhetoric Review* 20 (2001): 66-94; Brian R. McGee, "The Argument from Definition Revisited: Race and Definition in the Progressive Era," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 35 (1999): 141-158; and Roger Gilles, "Richard Weaver Revised Rhetoric Left, Right, and Middle," *Rhetoric Review* 15 (1996): 128-141.

[10] Rebecca Watts Bridges, "The Rhetoric of Southern Identity: Debating the Shift from Division to Identification in the turn-of-the-century South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas A & M, 2003.)

study acknowledge that Weaver formed many of his thoughts about rhetoric and ethics from his views on the South and religion.[11] Knowing Weaver had an influence on so many other areas of southern studies and that he was greatly aware of rhetorical tactics leads one to wonder about his role in the formation and evolution of southern rhetorical studies. The investigation of that role begins with his views on the Agrarian movement.

Weaver saw the Fugitive/Agrarian movement as more than reactionary. To grasp ideas behind the movement he believed "involved an understanding that this group was not a coterie of reactionary intellectuals or devotees of the moonlight-and-magnolia worship of southern culture."[12] He understood the varied levels of beliefs among the Twelve, and yet the influence of the movement affected his thought greatly. Unlike many followers of the Vanderbilt group, Weaver did not see the South as an Eden devastated by the loss of the Civil War. As Curtis and Thompson argue, Weaver never fell for "a constricting sectionalism that thrives on the belief that all would have been well south of the Potomac had the Confederacy bested the Union armies."[13] His significant contribution to the movement and the invention of southern literature stemmed from his ability to re-frame many of the ideas and motivations behind the movement into a philosophical debate. Kreyling gives credit for Weaver's distinct contribution to his background: "Weaver was neither poet, novelist, nor literary critic." Instead he was a "rhetorician who saw his mission on the frontiers of philosophy; debate was his way of life."[14] Weaver had an understanding of literary history and southern intellectual development not shared by any of the Vanderbilt group that gave him a different

[11] Core, "Introduction," in *The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver*, xi-xii.
[12] Young, *Richard M. Weaver 1910-1963*, 37.
[13] Core, "Introduction," in *The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver*, xviii.
[14] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*, 20-21.

perspective on the ideals put forth in *I'll Take My Stand.* His viewpoint was largely shaped by his interests in debate, rhetoric, and philosophy as well as literary history and the South. Weaver did not share the former Fugitives' interest in writing poetry and fiction; instead he looked to argument and history to validate his position on the South.

The concern over the decline of southern culture, morals, and "way of life" as described in the Agrarian manifesto influenced Weaver's philosophical viewpoint. Throughout his college days at the University of Kentucky and Vanderbilt Weaver had often shown a personal sympathy with the South and its culture, although, he credits his years at LSU where he concentrated on Civil War history as significant to his views on the South. Instead of picking up a textbook and learning of the facts, dates, and numbers of casualties associated with the war, Weaver paid "special attention to that of the losing side," where he found "the people who emerged were human, all-too-human."[15] Weaver believed in studying a lost cause for the unique essence of what one may learn: "The study and appreciation of a lost cause have some effect of turning history into philosophy."[16] This distinct concentration of southern studies from the Agrarians made Weaver a key link in the discussion of southern literary studies and southern cultural studies. While the Vanderbilt Twelve chose poetry as their link to southern culture, Weaver analyzed literary history and historical events.

Weaver's views on the South coincide with his theoretical views on rhetoric. An idealist, Weaver sought to re-establish a value system into American society. His excitement over the Agrarian belief system stems from his view that America needed stronger ethics and values to guide individual actions. In *Ideas Have Consequences* he

[15] Richard Weaver, "Up from Liberalism," in Scotchie, *The Vision of Richard Weaver,* 25.
[16] Ibid.

states: "It is the appalling problem, when it comes to actual cases, of getting men to distinguish between better and worse . . . There is ground for declaring that modern man has become a moral idiot."[17] To work toward a more ethical and moral society, Weaver claimed two clear tenets to his philosophy: 1) political conservatism and 2) Platonic idealism.[18] He employed these tenets as filters to view southern thought and life and as evidence for how people set morals and values. Like the Agrarians, Weaver looked to the Old South for ways to handle the present; however, Weaver's particular interest remained the moral decisions rooted in Old South order.

His political conservatism contrasted with the two years Weaver spent as a socialist during his undergraduate work at the University of Kentucky.[19] Finding liberalism disconcerting, Weaver, at Vanderbilt, was then influenced by the Southern Agrarian philosophy of John Crowe Ransom and other former Fugitives. Leaving Vanderbilt with these two contrasting political viewpoints, Weaver eventually fell on the side of conservatism for which he credits Ransom's teaching and his research at LSU. He valued the Agrarian ideals of an individual small property ownership class, contact and preservation of nature, and a pluralistic society. He found science morally and ethically inadequate to solve the world's major problems. He praises the Vanderbilt Agrarian philosophy: "The power of the Vanderbilt writers to stimulate a great distance and over a long period stems from the fact that their thought, taken as a whole, offers not just

[17] Richard Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 1.
[18] Both of these characteristics of Weaver's philosophy are identified in *Language is Sermonic*: *Richard M. Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric*, ed. Richard L. Johannesen, Rennard Strickland, and Ralph T. Eubanks, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 7-30. Versions of these ideas are articulated throughout Weaver's works.
[19] Weaver discusses his political transition in "Up From Liberalism," in Scotchie, *The Vision of Richard Weaver*, 19-36.

sociology, but an aesthetic, an ethic, and perhaps also a metaphysic."[20] From these basic principles, Weaver takes a "conservative" position that affects his overall thinking.

Working from a Platonic viewpoint, Weaver desired a reinstatement of transcendental beliefs as guiding truths to aid in the ethical and moral decisions of politics as well as day to day life. "Reality for him was a hierarchy in which the ultimate Idea of Good constituted the value standard by which all other existents could be appraised for degree of goodness and truth. Truth to him was the degree to which things and ideas in the material world conform to their ideas, archetypes, and essences."[21] Weaver's concept of good, justice, and freedom were ideals which he expected society and culture to defend and depend. He relished and praised order both of the individual and within civilization. His books *Ideas Have Consequences, Ethics of Rhetoric*, and *Visions of Order: The Cultural Crisis of Our Time,* communicate much of his ideas on this topic. In these works Weaver claims that order and status maintain and protect culture.[22] Structure and hierarchy are the foundations on which any culture must rest. We are in a world hierarchal in nature whether we like it or not, therefore, we had best deal with order in the most beneficial way. Equality before the law is fine, but in any other context unrealistic and unnatural: "the most insidious idea employed to break down society is an undefined equalitarianism."[23] The answer Weaver gives in contrast to equality is fraternity: "The ancient feeling of brotherhood carries obligations of which equality knows nothing." Using the example of family, Weaver discusses how hierarchy

[20] Richard Weaver, "Agrarianism in Exile," in *The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver*, 37.
[21] Johannesen, Strickland, and Eubanks, *Language is Sermonic*, 12-13.
[22] Richard Weaver, *Visions of Order* (Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1995), 22-39.
[23] Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences*, 41.

is inherent in family, and yet works for the good of all members.[24] These concepts of an ideal good, hierarchal structures, and transcendental beliefs all help form Weaver's essential philosophy that motivated his scholarly endeavors.

This basic idealist philosophy was deeply rooted in Weaver's studies on the South. Through his research on the Confederate South, Weaver found an ideal. Describing the South as "regarding science as the false messiah," he praises the southern tradition of resistance to industry and to cultural ambiguity.[25] He delighted in southern myth as representative of southern philosophy saying:

> The Southerner . . . has tended to live in the finite, balanced, and proportional world which classical man conceived . . . Life is not simply a linear progression, but a drama, with rise and fall. Happiness may exist as much in contemplation as in activity. Experience alone is not good; it has to be accompanied by the human commentary. From this, I believe, has come the South's great fertility in myth and anecdote. It is not so much a sleeping South as a dreaming one. [26]

As the Vanderbilt Agrarians used myth as a way of writing about the South and of countering science, Weaver saw myth as a connection to transcendence – a search for and representation of the ideal. The myths of southern culture played straight into Weaver's philosophical thoughts. His conservative, neo-Platonist ideals came to light through his writings about the South. Southern myth, history, literature, and lifestyle indicated a philosophical, and perhaps metaphysical, symbol of longevity, which Weaver consistently defended.

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[24] Ibid., 41-43.
[25] George Core and M.E. Bradford, ed., *The Southern Tradition at Bay* (New Rochelle: Arlington House Publishers, 1968), 30-31.
[26] Richard Weaver, "The South and the American Union," in *The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver*, 240.

By starting from history and philosophy, Weaver argued that the South was part of a continuing strand of Western civilization and, therefore, carried forth truths at the core of Western culture. The South was representative of order, spirituality, and moral integrity. Weaver found a system of both moral idealism and Platonic order. For Weaver, the South extended European culture far beyond the North: "Deep in its cultural cortex the mind of Richard Weaver's South insists upon its oneness with its whole that surpasses the part."[27] The North lost its European connections by focusing on science and capitalism, according to Weaver. The South's gain and the North's loss were truths or values handed down at the core of humane civilization. The term "humane civilization" is an important one, for Weaver felt the best parts of Western and European culture were its humane characteristics, and Weaver reveled in the similarities of southern and European ideals. He discusses the Agrarians role in understanding this phenomenon:

> A suspicion began to dawn that the society they had grown up with in the South was in the main tradition of Western European civilization. It was the North and not the South which represented an aberration from a historic culture, and which therefore had to assume the burden of proof. It became broadly true . . . that the notorious conservatism of the South was but the European character of its institutions.[28]

He then put his observations in terms of religion: "I began to see it [the South] in theological terms . . . 'the authority of fact' is a phrase that I am a little uncomfortable with, because it is readily turned, unless one is vigilant, into an idolatry of circumstance,

[27] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*, 31.
[28] Weaver, "Agrarianism in Exile," in *The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver,* 31.

and this is the most unspiritual of all conditions."[29] To help him discuss and analyze southern culture, Weaver borrowed heavily from John Crowe Ransom's concepts of myth and religion. Ransom's thesis in *God without Thunder* inspired Weaver:

> The idea of Ransom's that chiefly took possession of me at this time was that of the 'unorthodox defense of orthodoxy' . . . I began to perceive that many traditional positions in our world had suffered not so much because of inherent defect as because of the stupidity, ineptness, and intellectual sloth of those who for one reason or another were presumed to have their defense in charge.[30]

Ransom wrote the work as he was also working on *I'll Take My Stand.* Both were published in 1930 and influenced each other. *God without Thunder* was a "theology-based attack on the modern age."[31] Ransom writes, "Religious doctrines, are embodied in myths, and myths attempt to express truths which are not accessible to science."[32] For Ransom, and later Weaver, the South as a cultural idea is based on a connection to the metaphysical much like religion. The expression of the ideal can be accomplished through the use of myth, which helped Weaver re-infuse history with metaphysical meaning lost in the present.

This idea of the South being something bigger than itself was shared by the Agrarians through the discussions on historical consciousness, or the "past in the present."[33] Weaver borrowed the idea that southern history would eventually redeem

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[29] Weaver, "Up from Liberalism," *The Vision of Richard Weaver,* 27.
[30] Ibid. 22.
[31] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature,* 10.
[32] John Crowe Ransom, *God without Thunder: An Unorthodox Defense of Orthodoxy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930), 11-12.
[33] Fugitive Allen Tate is best known for this phrase as a way of describing the southern literature and the motivations behind it during the 1930s through the 1960s. Tate first used the term historical consciousness in relation to southern literature. From the standpoint of both critic and author in his essay "The Profession of Letters in the South" written in 1935, Tate describes his generation of southerners as steeped in historical consciousness – aware of "the past in the present." "The Southern novelist has left his mark upon the age; but it is of the age. From the peculiarly historical consciousness of the Southern writer has come good work of a special order; but the focus of the consciousness is quite temporary." The awareness or "historical consciousness" had motivated a generation of critics and novelists to discuss issues about

itself by transcending the past to offer the present answers to a spiritually defunct and meaningless society. In this way the South claimed a specific mission in the ontological plan of spirituality. In his book *The Southern Tradition at Bay* Weaver analyzed the psyche of the South and how it influenced the generation of *I'll Take My Stand*. Michael Kreyling explains the significance of Weaver's study: "he goes into the post-bellum southern intellectual life to identify the culture of the fathers' fathers. Like Plato rather than Protagoras, Weaver finds an ideal – the South as poetic constant – to serve as the measure of human social and literary endeavor."[34] Like the Agrarians, Weaver railed against the evils of science, industrialism, and mass production. He, too, felt that the South had a moral quality that could teach the rest of the nation how to live a more spiritually profound life. Unlike the Agrarians, Weaver did not look to literature for examples of metaphysical development; instead Weaver looked to literary history. In taking this approach he made a link between southern literature, history, and the formations of southern culture as part of a moral and humane civilization. Weaver continued the argument that the South and its culture had a metaphysical connection separate from anything that the rest of the industry driven country had to offer humankind. He declares southerness equates a type of religiosity connected to history: "The South has in a way made a religion of its history, or its suffering, and any sign of waning faith or laxness of spirit may be met by a reminder of how this leader endured and that one died, in the manner of saints and saviors." Weaver even suggests that southerness and religion are one: "Being a Southerner is definitely a spiritual condition

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southern identity, history, and culture in an effort to bridge the gap between the Old South and the post World War I South. See Tate, *Essays of Four Decades*, 533-534.

[34] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*, 25.

like being a Catholic or Jew."[35] Industry and science separate permanence from history by their very natures, therefore, the South's Agrarian roots and defense against industry gave it a moral upper hand – a higher connection with history. The basis of this view is rooted in the beliefs and ideals first established and discussed by the Twelve Agrarians who wrote *I'll Take My Stand.*

Weaver's philosophy and its origin with the Southern Agrarians make his influence on southern rhetorical studies worth a closer look. Weaver's influence on southern rhetorical scholarship and the southern oratorical canon may be seen in at least three ways: 1) a conservative and rigid canon, 2) a defensive voice bound to the burden of southern history, and 3) analysis tied and rooted in myth.

When discussing problems with canon, scholars tend to bring up the basic argument of exclusion and standards. Anthologies and textbooks with their "approved" inclusions are expected to hold to high standards of aesthetics as well as quality. The question then becomes who sets the guidelines for aesthetics and quality – a question that is important due to cultural differences in standards. In the most benign of instances sincere belief in the said standards are the reasons orators are included or excluded from a canon; in other more political situations orators may be included or excluded based on the vision they portray or their race, class, or gender. Such problems arise when the term "southern" is added to the canon description. The Agrarians started a tradition founded in the idea that the South was indeed a "white man's South." Not necessarily in the Old South sense of slave and slave owner, but in the idea that the South was based in the Anglo-European culture and traditions and that southern culture reflected many of those

[35] Richard Weaver, "The South and the American Union," in *The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver*, 250-251.

traditions. Weaver also acknowledged this lineage, defining "southerness" as an identity associated with European white culture.

For many years the southern rhetorical canon has reflected this notion. When looking at scholarship in the field one sees a large percentage of the attention spent on white politicians, white preachers, white soldiers, white statesmen, and of course white southern demagogues. Even those working to dissolve the myths surrounding southern orators end up predominantly analyzing white male speakers when they analyze southern rhetoric. There are exceptions to this rule. Several studies have been done in civil rights rhetoric and on certain southern African American speakers such as W.E.B. Dubois, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Booker T. Washington.[36] Stuart Towns' most recent two-volume set of southern rhetoric anthologies also includes several women orators – both black and white.[37] However, while these exceptions are important they do not negate the fact that southern culture is still most notably recognized as a white, male-dominant world. Defining the South in this light goes back to the Old South vision of order, something in which Weaver greatly believed. The order was meant as a way of doing things on a higher moral ground. Unfortunately, the canon reflects this order by being a predominantly white male canon. The roots of seeing the South and defining southern rhetoric in these terms go back to the Vanderbilt Agrarians and Richard Weaver.

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[36] For some examples of these critiques see Danny Champion, "Booker T. Washington Versus W.E.B. Dubois: A Study in Rhetorical Contrast," in *Oratory in the New South*, ed. Waldo Braden (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 174-202; Andrew King, "Booker T. Washington and the Myth of Heroic Materialism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60 (1974): 323-328; John Louis Lucaites and Celeste Michelle Condit, "Reconstructing Equality: Culturetypal and Counter-Cultural Rhetorics in the Martyred Black Vision," *Communication Monographs* 57 (1990): 5-25; and Martha Solomon Watson, "The Issue is Justice: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Response to Birmingham Clergy," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 7 (2004): 1-22.

[37] Towns, *Oratory and Rhetoric in the Nineteenth-Century South* and *Public Address in the Twentieth-Century South*.

The defensive tone in some southern rhetorical scholarship echoes an apologetic mood found in Weaver's writings on the South. At the time Weaver wrote about the South in his dissertation during the early 1940s, and later in articles during the 1950s, he was fighting at least two battles. One came in the form of the moral decay and scientific abuse found in the pursuit of industry and mass consumption, and the other was the constant derogatory position consistently placed upon the South during this time period. Many reasons exist for both the increase in scientific influence (the space race, the Cold War) and the problems in the South (racial problems, poverty, problems in education); yet Weaver in many ways came to the defense of both moral and religious integrity and southern lifestyle. His belief in history as a way to find a moral order found its voice in the defensive tone Weaver used to claim the South had lessons for the rest of the nation. As the South endured ridicule from the rest of the nation, Weaver saw tradition and order at stake. He advocates for those characteristics, and in doing so, defends the southern ideal as a standard for transcendence.

The third characteristic of Weaver's influence on southern rhetorical scholarship is the overwhelming use of myth within theoretical frameworks. The analysis of myth is so prevalent that a glance at the southern rhetoric publications in the *Southern Speech Communication Journal* and NCA publications shows the only other more prevalent framework is neo-Aristotelian and close readings. Two scholars whose work on southern rhetoric highly relies on myth are Waldo Braden and Stephen Smith. Both are discussed in detail later in this project, however, their dependence on myth as a way to talk about the South follows Weaver's lead and reflects his influence and vision of both the South and southern rhetoric. This reliance on mythic analysis results in a canon with a lack of

varied theoretical stance. Such a narrow view of analysis leaves southern rhetorical studies outside the public address renaissance and left in the past much like the Old South of which Weaver fondly writes.

Weaver's influence on the southern rhetoric manifests itself through the southern public address canon, the defensive tone that creeps into the most objective of analysis, and the use and reliance on mythic analysis. Like Weaver, southern rhetorical scholars seem in need of a way to define a South transcendent of its sins yet tied to its history, a history reflective, on some level, of a moral good. After all, why study the South and its rhetorical history if not for the more general application to speakers, rhetoric, history, and American behavior at large?

From the theoretical and political perspectives of the Agrarians came an intense study of southern literature. In the future this genre would be canonized, discussed and critiqued by the likes of Louis D. Rubin, Lewis P. Simpson, Richard Gray, Michael Kreyling, Jefferson Humphries, John Lowe, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Yeager, Fred Hobson, and numerous others.[38] Their work would form an area of study still controversial today. Weaver became the bridge between southern literature and southern rhetoric. He transferred many of the thoughts of the Agrarians to a form of argument accessible to those in southern rhetorical studies. He also helped make the arguments for southern studies that could be applied in broader terms to not only southern literature, but

[38] This list constitutes just a sample of those discussing and debating the development of southern literature and southern studies. A few of their works dealing with this subject include Louis D. Rubin, *A Gallery of Southerners* and *The American South: Portrait of a Culture*; Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*; Simpson, *The Brazen Face of History*; O'Brien, *The Idea of the American South: 120-1941*; Richard Gray, *Southern Aberrations: Writers of the American South and the Problem of Regionalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000); Patricia Yeager, *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing, 1930-1990* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996); Jefferson Humphries and John Lowe, eds., *The Future of Southern Letters* (New York: Oxford UP, 1990); and Fred Hobson, *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World* (Athens, U of Georgia P, 1991).

to defining the South by looking at the discourse of history. Such a bridge would help meld many of the definitions from history and literature into a form usable in rhetorical studies. The evidence of his influence, as well as the Agrarians, increasingly reveals itself in the work of early southern public address scholars.

3.2 The Birth of Southern Oratorical Studies

As the Agrarians shaped southern literature and defined southern culture and as Richard Weaver built a bridge between literature and public speaking, two key rhetorical scholars began to shape the future of southern public address. At first the connection between the Agrarians and Richard Weaver to southern oratorical studies may seem a bit tenuous. After all Weaver and the chief Agrarians were primarily coming out of English while southern oratorical studies came out of speech departments. The key to understanding the connection is to comprehend how literature, speech, and history formed the southern culture that these various scholars were examining. Two important elements connect literature, history, and speech: early southern literary anthologies and the southern cultural contributions of the scholars themselves.

In the early part of the twentieth century, as southern literary historians were looking for ways to distinguish and redeem their culture, speeches would often show up as examples of literature.[39] Examples of this include William P. Trent's *Southern Writers* in 1905 and Carl Holliday's *History of Southern Literature* in 1906.[40] Only after a substantial assortment of quality southern literature was collected would speech texts be considered separate from southern literature and southern literary studies.

[39] At this particular time southern literary historians were of an intrinsic nature. In other words they studied literature of a particular time period or analyzed it over time. Only after the 1930s did a more extrinsic form of southern literary history begin.

[40] For further study on the origins of southern oratory as an area of study see Braden, "Emergence," 126.

A second example of the relationship between southern literature and southern oratory lies in the interconnection of both within southern culture. As the Agrarians analyzed and wrote of their ideas they added to the cultural phenomenon. So just as William Faulkner, Thomas Nelson Page, and Thomas Jefferson gave the Agrarians literature to analyze and explain, and the Agrarians and Civil War history gave Weaver food for his own theoretical stance, these scholars in turn gave future generations texts to discuss in southern literary history. Whereas Henry Grady, John C. Calhoun, and Patrick Henry had left oratorical texts for southern oratory scholars to critique and analyze, the historical speeches themselves were an obvious part of culture, just as the critiques written by southern oratory scholars became a part of a cultural phenomenon. This conscious study of southern oratory began in the mind of an Assistant Professor in the Speech Department at Louisiana State University.

3.2.1 Dallas Dickey and the Call for Southern Oratory

Across the courtyard at Louisiana State University from where Richard Weaver was working on his doctoral dissertation the future "Patriarch of Southern Oratory" was starting his professional career. Dallas Dickey came to LSU to work on his doctorate in 1935. Finding a Speech Department concentrating on Radio Broadcasting and Voice and Diction courses, Dickey supplemented his studies with courses in history, particularly southern history under the tutelage of historian Wendell Holmes Stephenson who raised Dickey's interest in southern history and southern oratory.[41] Dickey finished his dissertation in 1938, and stayed to teach at LSU as an instructor and later as a professor until 1946 when he went on to teach at the University of Florida. Dickey would have

[41] Waldo W. Braden and Ralph T. Eubanks, "Dallas C. Dickey: Pioneer of the Critical Study of Southern Public Address," *The Southern Speech Communication Journal* 44 (1979): 119-146.

been at LSU during Weaver's time as a graduate student, although there is no indication that the two may have crossed paths. Of interest is Dickey's concern for the "history of southern oratory." Like Weaver, Dickey believed in the necessity of analyzing how history affects text. As Weaver sat in the English department writing about the Civil War, the Confederacy, and the Agrarians, Dickey dug into the historical elements that affect a speaker and his/her rhetorical situation.

Dickey's interest in southern oratory first appears in a *Quarterly Journal of Speech* article written in 1943. The article entitled "What Directions Should Future Research in American Public Address Take?" was a critique of a nine year study edited by W. Norwood Brigance published under the title *A History and Criticism of American Public Address*. Dickey had some complaints with the study, the chief being that not enough southern orators were included in the compilation. Time and time again in the article Dickey mentions speakers that need to be studied and preserved – most of whom were southern: "a great many individuals can be cited upon whom no adequate research exists. One is William C. Preston of South Carolina. Another is L.Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi." Dickey goes on to mention Lamar Hamilton, Henry Washington Hilliard of Alabama, Jefferson Davis, John C. Calhoun, and several others. In fact the examples Dickey gives of great orators still in need of studying and critiquing are more often than not southerners.[42] Strikingly similar, Dickey shares with Weaver a focus on history as well as his concern that public oratory scholars analyze southern oratory: "We shall expect our scholars to be more than amateur historians, for they must handle and evaluate the forces of social and political history, and they must be able to do so with professional

[42] Dallas Dickey, "What Direction should Future Research in Public Address Take?" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 29 (1943): 300-304.

competency."[43] His concern over the quality of research that preserves and discusses southern leaders is reminiscent of the Agrarian call for a more developed southern culture and southern literature. "The special mission which animated his writings was that of revealing the distinctiveness of the South -–particularly the Old South – through critical examination of its oratory."[44] Dallas Dickey tapped into the basic Vanderbilt Agrarian idea that preservation of southern culture – including its history of public speaking – remained an important priority for academics.

As Dickey continued his work as an assistant and later associate professor at LSU he began to direct student work on southern orators. He continued this focus as a professor at the University of Florida where he moved in 1946.[45] Perhaps his own work and the interests of his students led him to write "Southern Oratory: a Field for Research" in December of 1947.[46] The article is considered the official call for southern oratorical studies. Dickey outlines many of the speakers he thinks deserve academic and critical attention; his lists of possible studies into categories of historical leaders, obscure men of influence, "general and specific periods and special issues and events in southern history," the history of public speaking of a particular southern state, preaching, "Negro speaking," and "contemporary" southern speakers. The categories include a striking list of names including James Madison, Sam Houston, Jefferson Davis, Huey Long, John Sharp Williams, George Poindexter, Henry S. Foote, James Henry Thornwell, Richard Menifee, Ben Tillman, Booker T. Washington, Eugene Talmadge, Theodore Bilbo, Ellis Arnall and Claude Pepper. In total Dickey mentions thirty-four men of political or

[43] Dickey, "Direction," 304.
[44] Braden and Eubanks, "Pioneer," 129.
[45] Ibid., 120.
[46] Dickey, "Southern Oratory," 463.

religious distinction. Interestingly, and true to the attitudes of his generation, Dickey never mentions women speakers and gives only one example of an African American speaker, Booker T. Washington. Placing the priority on white male speakers, Dickey favors the patriarchal male Protestant view of southern culture. Dickey follows the lead of the Agrarians as to what constitutes southern culture and in doing so maps out a field of study depicting this viewpoint.

While Dickey's importance in outlining the field of research for southern oratorical scholars proved relevant, his conscious effort to add the rhetorical viewpoint to history framed the direction southern oratorical studies took in the future. Dissatisfied at the way historians had stereotyped southern orators, Dickey led the charge to rid scholars of a one-dimensional view of southern public address while also defending the southern culture he held dear. Taking issue with Merle Curti's claim that most Old South oratory was "as ephemeral as it was florid," Dickey sets out to show Curti's comment as a sloppy generalization of southern public speaking style.[47] Dickey's frustration at the description stems from the desire to both examine the distinctiveness of *southern* oratory and defend the quality of southern orators. For example, in reply to Curti, Dickey tries to even the rules of the playing field by proclaiming: "how much more ephemeral were the southern orators than those of New England or the Middle West?"[48] Later in the article Dickey gives a type of "there they go picking on the South again" response when he proclaims: "Possibly too, the fact that the south became the minority element preceding the Civil War, and then fought a losing civil conflict followed by years of the slowest rebuilding, has had something to so with the quality of the generalizations made concerning her

[47] Dickey, "Ephemeral," 16.
[48] Ibid., 17.

people, manners and attitudes."[49] Dickey was not one to take such an attack on southern oratory lightly. Reminiscent of the Agrarians and their stand against Mencken, Dickey proceeded to give example after example of how Curti had missed the real facts about southern oratorical style. The article achieved what Dickey desired. It set the record straight about male southern oratory style, but it also achieved a very significant moment for southern oratory and public address studies in general. Dallas Dickey made it known that historians had their place, but it was not their work critiquing public address. He showed the need for public address scholarship and in particular he illustrated, through his defense, how southern oratorical scholars could add to history in a way historians were ill equipped to accomplish. For southern oratorical scholars Dickey proved the story on the South lacked a few chapters. While historians had told one version, southern oratorical scholars had much to add.

Indeed, Dickey's contribution to southern studies at large, defensive as it was, falls in line with those that came before. Like the Agrarians and Richard Weaver, Dickey saw a need for "getting the facts straight" on the South and like the others he used his particular field of study to answer the call and encourage scholars to join the effort. From these seeds southern rhetorical scholarship would move into contemporary times. However, it would not be the Agrarians or Weaver or Dickey who advanced contemporary southern rhetoric. Another LSU scholar, Waldo Braden, would make that progression.

3.2.2 Waldo Braden and the Analysis of Southern Public Address

While the Agrarians, Richard Weaver, and Dallas Dickey paved the way for southern oratorical studies, Waldo Braden and those that followed him questioned many

[49] Ibid.

of the assumptions laid down by the previous scholars as to what constituted and made up southern oratory. In Braden's stage of southern oratorical scholarship the canon became more solidified, assumptions of other disciplines about southern oratory were challenged, and strides were made to discover the roots of southern oratory. As contemporary scholars added critiques of southern oratory, theoretical perspectives were challenged but little was done to explode the southern oratorical canon. Braden inadvertently passes on influences from the Vanderbilt Agrarians and Richard Weaver by picking up Dickey's challenge to analyze southern public address. In his analysis two characteristics illustrate these influences: 1) Braden's development of a canon through negation, and 2) his primary use of myth for analysis. These elements continue to shape and define southern public address criticism. To understand the inter-workings of these various elements it is important to identify the origin of Braden's interest in southern rhetoric.

Waldo Braden's significance in southern rhetorical scholarship is a direct result of Dickey's influence and purpose to recognize southern public address. Dallas Dickey's death in 1957 would eventually lead to Waldo Braden's interest in southern public address. In 1946 when Dallas Dickey left LSU to take a teaching position at the University of Florida a new scholar would walk the halls of the LSU Speech Department. Waldo Braden, a mid-westerner by birth, was not initially interested in work on southern oratory. When Dickey died, Braden's peers in the Speech Association of America approached him to edit a project unfinished by Dickey on Old South oratory. Braden hesitantly accepted and began a new career interest as one of the most prevalent scholars in southern oratorical criticism.

By taking on the Old South project, Waldo Braden was thrown into an area in which he soon saw amazing potential. His work as editor of *Oratory in the Old South* led Braden to discover southern oratory and southern speakers. Taking Dallas Dickey's call to research southern rhetoric to heart, Braden worked to preserve and anthologize southern oratorical research more than any other scholar of his time. Much as Louis Rubin made a conscious effort to anthologize and preserve a southern literary history for the field of southern literature, Waldo Braden purposefully set out to critique and anthologize southern oratorical history.

His interest in the field was philosophical in nature, as Andrew King points out; "to him it [the South] was the last place in America where actions might have real consequences and where people were unprotected from their sins." Later in his life Braden became fascinated with snake handling preachers and their followers. Seeing these people as "Southern folk" acting out against the "empty materialism of cities," Braden felt their cultural rituals were a type of "backlash" against the sterile, mass produced, spiritless secular world.[50] Braden felt rural portions of the South were intentionally holding out against the big cities and urban culture of the New South mentality and he found that both moving and fascinating. Like the Vanderbilt Agrarians, Braden saw the South as a place distinct from the rest of the country -- fighting against the soulless greed of consumption and the condescending secondary status. Unlike the Agrarians, however, Braden recognized what John Crowe Ransom did not, that this modern-day-rebel-yet-dying South was itself a sub-set of other southern myths. "The South (like the folk) is always dying; it is one of the oldest Southern traditions.

[50] Andrew King gives a complete discussion of Braden and his philosophy toward southern oratory in "Waldo Braden: The Critic as Outsider," in *Twentieth-Century Roots of Rhetorical Studies*, 144-156.

Magnolias rot in the moonlight, but they never disappear."[51] While claiming this viewpoint was informed by his position as outsider (he was from Iowa), Braden utilized the "tool" of the Agrarians, the study of myth, while creating a southern public address canon through the negation of others.

Braden challenged those from other fields who attempted oratorical critiques by showing how they were wrong. He accomplished this through the analysis of myth and neo-Aristotelian critiques. By using these theoretical tools, Braden could contradict historians and literary scholars who "got it wrong" while also working to create legitimacy for southern public address research. Ironically Braden hated the myths of the South. His scholarly attention was drawn to defying these myths and yet that defiance became the very instrument he used to perpetuate a canon of southern oratory that itself would become a misrepresentation. Braden, like Dickey before him, had little patience with historians and literary scholars who would make sweeping generalizations about southern orators and their speeches. "The question assaulted him: Had these critics actually read the body of speeches that they dismissed as florid, vituperative, and provincial?"[52] In "The Emergence of the Concept of Southern Oratory: 1850-1950," Braden gives the reader insight into his own motivation for scholarship, "to separate blood and flesh oratory . . . from 'the obscuring legend.'"[53] An interesting statement considering Vanderbilt Agrarians criticized New South historians for, "perpetuating original errors by failing to write genuinely critical history."[54] Like the Agrarians,

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[51] Ibid., 149.
[52] Ibid., 150.
[53] Waldo Braden, *The Oral Tradition of the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 1.
[54] Paul M. Gaston, "The 'New South,'" in *Writing Southern History: Essays in Historiography in Honor of Fletcher M. Green,* ed. Arthur S. Link and Rembert W. Patrick (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 327.

Braden shows concern over the prevalent misrepresentations of the South, especially when the stereotypes are not only wrong, but also degrading to the study of public address.

Braden's interest in the South was complex. Being from Iowa and an "outsider," he had little patience for the idea articulated by Faulkner's fictional character Quentin Compson that to understand the South "You have to be born there."[55] Braden claimed his outside status gave him a unique view of southern culture and identity, one unavailable to those from the South. In speaking of southern born Dallas Dickey, Braden once said "Dickey was a local colorist and a regionalist and damned good at that sort of thing but he missed the guilt and the mendacity that an outsider sees."[56] Braden never assumed the same motivations as the Agrarians, Weaver, or Dickey in his desire to set the record straight about the *South*. Braden's motivation came from wanting to set the record straight about *southern public address scholarship*. In other words, Braden meant to show how the South had misrepresented itself and in some cases its own oratory. Ironically he ended up creating a canon of southern oratory and rhetorical history, utilizing historical research to critique that canon, and exercising the same tools to talk about the South as the Agrarians and Weaver – myth.

Braden's interest in southern oratory required him to question previous assumptions by revisiting those speakers and speeches analyzed by the scholars of southern literature and southern history. Most of these speakers were already a part of the

[55] William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (New York, Vintage Books, 1972) originally published in 1936. Literary critics oft quote this line of Faulkner's as representative of the defensive stance southerners constantly argue when faced with negative treatment of their literature and culture. Quentin Compson is making the statement to his college roommate Shreve who is a Canadian asking questions about southern history.
[56] King, "Braden," 144.

early literary canon developed by anthologists in the mid-to-late 1800s. Other speakers and their speeches were anthologized by the likes of Tom Watson and Frances Pendleton Gaines, both of whose attempts failed from the lack of the rhetorical scholar's understanding.[57] As a result speakers and speeches were canonized for many reasons, most of which dealt with how well the speaker illustrated a particular vision of the South (such as the apologetic South, the New South, the romantic South). For Braden to prove false the myths surrounding these speakers he had to study and publish research on them. This resulted in Braden inadvertently defining and canonizing what we today consider southern public address based on the negation of what others outside the field considered southern oratory. One reason for this "canon of negation" was Braden's approach to rhetorical scholarship, an approach based on historical "accuracy."

Because Braden looks at southern oratory from an historical basis, his approach to understanding southern oratory is not just "traditional" rhetorical criticism. Braden uses rhetorical history as an explanation of how southern oratory developed and why.[58] Throughout his early work he researches the development, emergence, and motivation behind this area of study. For example, in "The Emergence of the Concept of Southern Oratory, 1850-1950"[59] Braden traces southern oratory through school readers, literary histories, speech anthologies, and historical works and examines the development through each of the archives. In his article "The Oral Tradition in the Old South"

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[57] Thos. E. Watson, ed. *The South in the Building of the Nation: History of Southern Oratory*, vol. 9 (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 2002) original copyright 1909; and Francis Pendleton Gaines, *Southern Oratory: A Study in Idealism* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1946).

[58] For a discussion of the term "rhetorical history," see Kathleen Turner, *Doing Rhetorical History: Cases and Concepts* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998). Turner sees rhetorical history as a social construct including, "the ways in which rhetorical processes have constructed social reality at particular times and in particular contexts and . . . the nature of the study of history as an essential rhetorical process (2).

[59] Braden, "Emergence," 183.

Braden again uses rhetorical history to outline the culture, mindset, and tastes of Old South audiences as they influenced the development of southern oratory.[60] Braden believed history to be the ultimate standard; therefore, his approach to rhetoric placed what had been over what had yet to be. As King states, "Braden never rejected the discipline of history as the gold standard of all scholarship . . . [His] best friends . . . were historians or, at best, critics of public address primarily interested in setting the record straight."[61] Setting the record straight required going back to the "record." By looking at southern rhetoric and its development, Braden consolidates and reifies the southern canon.

The southern oratorical canon, based on the observations of historians and literary critics, was not originally set by rhetorical scholars with clear criteria in hand. Unlike the literary canon, southern oratory did not have a well-understood standard of quality for debate. In Braden's early work he, as well as others of like mind, spent as much time arguing about what was "southern" as he did what was good "southern oratory."[62] At times Braden seems confused as to whether southern oratory constitutes a genre of public address. While the term "southern" would continue to be debated throughout the fields of southern oratory, southern literature and southern history, the criteria used to canonize southern oratory would become solidly based upon the examples set forth by Braden and Dickey. In 1947 Dickey had challenged students of public address to add historical figures not yet a part of the canon. In contrast to this approach Braden would base much of his research on expanding what history and literature had already discussed on some

[60] Braden, *The Oral Tradition of the South*, 22-43.
[61] King, "Braden," 146.
[62] To get an idea of how these discussions developed see Braden, "Emergence," 162; and Kearney, "What's Southern about Southern Oratory?" 30.

level. Braden saw public address as a type of expansion of historical rather than literary thought. Even though he was aware of the connection of southern oratory to southern literature, history would always be Braden's starting point because it was associated with all of public address, not just southern oratory.

Due to Braden's interest in history and rhetoric, he has several things in common with Richard Weaver. Braden and Weaver both shared the attitude that to be a true cultural critic one needed to acquire the "outside eye." Braden, being born and educated in the Midwest, naturally enjoyed this perspective, while Weaver acquired the viewpoint when he moved to the University of Chicago where he spent most of his professional career. Braden often used references from *Southern Tradition at Bay* in his writings. Braden also respected Weaver's views on the South. His research shows clear acknowledgement and use of Weaver's ideas from *The Southern Tradition at Bay*.[63] Braden not only quotes Weaver, but his discussions on myth reflect understanding of Weaver's speculations.

Braden establishes southern rhetoric as distinctive because it is "myth encrusted." These myths in southern oratory are established on two levels, the first being the mythical creation of southern orators (grand eloquent, ephemeral and florid), and the second being the myths referenced within the speeches themselves (such as Lost Cause Myth, or Solid South Myth).[64] Braden's myth encrusted southern rhetoric represents a product indicative of the connection between southern literature studies, southern historical

[63] Braden quotes Weaver's description of Post-Civil War southerners needing to make sense of why "their best had failed." See "Repining Over an Irrevocable Past," in *Oratory in the New South*, 10.
[64] Dickey and Braden both identify problems with the myths of southern orators created by historians only remotely familiar with southern oratory as a genre of study. See Dickey, "Ephemeral," 16-20 and Braden, "The Concept of Southern Oratory." Braden outlines the various myths found in the speeches of southern orators in "Myths in a Rhetorical Context," in *The Oral Tradition in the South*, 65-82 and "Repining over an Irrevocable Past," in *Oratory in the New South*, 8-37.

studies, and southern rhetorical studies. This connection to southern literature goes back prior to the Civil War as Braden attests:

> It is my impression that the Southern literary historian helped build the growing image of Southern oratory. Hard pressed to collect a sufficient body of 'Southern literature,' they naturally turned to what were abundantly available – oratorical pieces . . .. [T]hey too were eager to put the South's culture on a footing with other sections; consequently, the first literary histories and collections of southern writings took note of the subject of southern oratory.[65]

Southern literary historians were inspired in lectures from 1892-1902 by a Louisiana State University English Professor, C. Alphonso Smith, who encouraged attention to southern oratory. The dates of Smith's lectures signify the growing awareness of southerners during the turn of the century to preserve and identify "southern culture." This awareness or "consciousness" stemmed from a desire to redeem the South from the negative connotations of defeat and inferiority felt after the loss of the Civil War and the mandates of Reconstruction.[66] According to Braden, the reasons literary anthologists collected southern oratory assisted in the preservation of myths surrounding the oratory. They specifically chose to anthologize "apologists and heroes" because those speeches tended to fit the preconceived notion of southern oratorical style and of a redeemable southern attitude. Braden's significant contributions to the field of southern oratory begin with his writings on the history of southern oratory and its canonical beginnings.

While Braden criticizes early southern literary anthologists, historians take a few criticisms from him as well. Braden's main criticism of historians is their lack of attention to the subject. "In main they [historians] base their conclusions upon scattered casual inferences by observers who chance to comment upon the subject in connection

[65] Braden, "Emergence,"10.
[66] Several historical works attest to the need of southerners to make meaning out of the defeat of the confederacy. See Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*; and Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*.

with discussions of the hysteria of a camp meeting, the drollness of country politicians, or the antics of a trial lawyer."[67] Disturbed over the treatment of southern oratory by literature and history, Braden set out to give credibility to public address study by studying southern oratory.

Through the study of myth, Braden dealt with misrepresentations by both literature and history and yet used myth as discussed by history and, at times, literature. The South and its myths consistently remain popular topics in history and literature. A glance at books on the subject gives just a sample of the work done on the topic.[68] Therefore, Braden's use of myth as a way of talking about southern oratory may have been new to the field of public address, but it wasn't new to discussions on the South. For example in his essay "Repining over an Irrevocable Past: The Ceremonial Orator in a Defeated Society, 1865-1900" Braden mentions historian George Tindall charging others to "seek to unravel" the myths of the South.[69] In several essays Braden mentions myth as viewed and defined by historian Richard Hofstadter and in "Emergence of the Concept of Southern Oratory, 1850-1950." Braden's well-known label "myth-encrusted" is borrowed from historian Bernard Mayo. The fact that Braden borrows from other sources is not the point here. The important element gained through Braden's writing is the contradictory nature in which he uses myth. While the Agrarians used myth as a way to talk about the South, in contrast to the scientific capitalist discussion of a New South, Braden uses myth as an aid or tool to examine the South. King states as much while quoting Braden: "Myth is just a tool for me, King . . . Myth allows me to understand

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[67] Braden, "Emergence," 20.
[68] A sampling for illustration includes Karanikas *Tiller of the Myth*; O'Brien *The Idea of the American South, 1920-1941*; Smith *Myth, Media, and the Southern Mind*; and Gerster and Cords, eds., *Myth and Southern History*.
[69] Braden, *Oratory in the New South*, 8.

history, and it makes me a better historian of public address."[70] Ironically the outcome for both Braden and the Agrarians ended up being the same. They both popularized and canonized myths of the South. These myths create a narrow viewpoint on the South, missing many of the cultural and significant aspects that make up the nature of the South. Braden recognized the problem with the southern oratorical canon when he discussed past anthologies, none of which "demonstrated a dimension sufficiently broad to represent speaking in the South." Yet a look at Braden's own work shows he spent more time refuting the myths surrounding white, male, Protestant politicians, preachers, and businessmen than he did concerning himself with the spoken word of southern slaves, suffragists, southern African Americans, anti-suffragists, anti-lynching activists, etc. Even Braden's edited volumes show little divergence from the former canon. *Oratory in the Old South* primarily critiques the various political positions that lead up to the Civil War.[71] Of course the volume, while finished by Braden, was the brainchild of Dallas Dickey. His next volume, however, shows only token attempts at broadening the canon. In *Oratory of the New South* Braden includes two chapters, out of eight, on issues affecting southern African Americans and women. One chapter compares the rhetoric of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois, while another critiques southern women's rhetoric between 1870 and 1920 in general. No mention is made of African American women, Appalachian rhetoric, or any other minority non-mainstream group. While it is true that publications have limited space, the fact remains that those included represent the typical image of southern rhetoric – predominantly white males of middle to upper

[70] King, "Braden," 147.
[71] Braden, *Oratory in the Old South*.

class status with a smidgen of middle to upper class white women and select well known African American males.

Braden actually recognizes the problems with the established southern oratory canon, but he never gets so far as to challenge that canon by adding other representative and challenging works for preservation. The reason for this lies in the historical linkage to the Vanderbilt Agrarians through Richard Weaver and Dallas Dickey. Braden spent his career challenging their assumptions without ever establishing a canon more representative of southern culture. In this way then, the study of southern oratory never quite made the change to the "Public Address Renaissance" other scholars attribute to public address studies.

The work of Waldo Braden remains some of the most influential in southern rhetorical scholarship. His use of myth, challenge of outside scholars, and view of oratory as historical text worthy of preservation all link him to the concept of southern culture framed by the Vanderbilt Agrarians, Richard Weaver, and even Dallas Dickey. Braden's efficiency as a scholar left us with significant ideas and definitions of how southern oratorical research should be done. This work still shadows contemporary work on southern public address.

Richard Weaver, Dallas Dickey, and Waldo Braden all contributed to the evolution of thought first established by the Vanderbilt Agrarians. These three scholars took the Agrarians' ideas on historical consciousness, southern cultural preservation and analysis of myth and debated and extended various Agrarian ideals. Weaver worked to bridge the valley between southern literature and southern rhetoric with his overriding conservatism and platonic ideals. Meanwhile Dallas Dickey led the charge to preserve

southern rhetoric within the Agrarian tradition of white, male, Protestant dominance. In contrast to these scholars, Braden concentrated on analysis of myth designed to both call into question aspects of the southern Agrarian ideals and also to provide good quality southern public address scholarship. Unfortunately Braden never quite achieved the re-conceptualization of the canon he knew was a problem. What he did accomplish tends to haunt southern public address scholarship today. Braden's voice became the final discussion on canon and theoretical invention in southern oratorical studies. The result of his "shadow" is ever present in works of those that follow.

Chapter 4.

The Ghost of Waldo Braden: Haunted without a Renaissance

> And everywhere there were the ghosts wandering restlessly through our everyday lives. We even grew fond of them as we walked the lonely curving paths across our trembling earth and felt them following us, like invisible pet dogs, wherever we went.
>
> -- Lillian Smith
> *Killers of a Dream,* 1949[1]

Ghosts have a distinct presence in southern culture. A visit to a plantation home, major southern city, or university campus eventually leads one to a story involving the revenge of a slave, confederate soldier, spurned female or murdered citizen resulting in the haunting of a ghost. The ghost exists as a reminder of a wrong or regret, a representation of unfinished business. The South is full of both ghost stories and real "ghosts" perpetuated by history and nurtured through guilt. Much of the time these ghosts are intentionally kept alive through the memorials and exhibits of past lives and past Souths. A drive down Richmond, Virginia's monument avenue attests to legacies left by Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and even Arthur Ashe. The Capitol in Montgomery, Alabama shows reminders of the southern paradox with the Confederate White House just blocks from the Civil Rights Memorial. Perhaps this paradox of old and new creates a key to knowing more about not only the haunting nature of southern culture, but the meanings behind the ghosts themselves.

Many reasons may explain why the South seems haunted by its history and legacy, such as tributes and appreciation for personalities considered charismatic and influential, a connection or identification to the values represented by a particular image, person, or time, or even the pragmatic benefits a particular reverence to the past may

hold, such as tourism. All these are reasons we hold on to and are haunted by our past, its histories, and its legacies. In the South not only do we hold on, we become comfortable with our ghosts; they become a part of our culture. These ghosts enjoy strong legacies as they influence the future in terms of the past.

Like the rest of the South and its culture, southern rhetoric is haunted by its past, its history, and its legacy. Many reasons may explain this significant influence of the past. Perhaps scholars such as the Vanderbilt Agrarians, Dickey, and Braden are so prolific, so magnetic and charismatic, that other scholars want to keep their questions and scholarship alive as a tribute to the scholars and the past. Perhaps contemporary scholars are still finding discoveries by returning to the inventions and theoretical discoveries of former southern rhetorical studies. Maybe the definitions of the South and southern rhetoric as perpetuated by these past scholars remains so entrenched that current southern public address researchers take these definitions for granted, and perhaps we are just comfortable with the terms, research, and theoretical perspectives that have come before us. My purpose here is not to try and speculate regarding the motivations of contemporary southern public address scholars. I do, however, intend to examine the parodies such connections to the past create when layered with present southern cultural ties. Indeed, what I most wish to contribute are questions, asking different questions that also rely on the past but look at current issues from a different perspective. I, therefore, endeavor to ask how the anxiety perpetuated by the haunting scholarship of the past shaped and haunted invention in southern rhetoric, how past scholarship resulted in southern public address scholars missing a renaissance, and to look beyond the past and its limitations toward a new legacy.

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[1] Lillian Smith, *Killers of the Dream* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1949, 1961, 1978), 112.

To answer such questions requires the recognition of the postsouth South; a South layered with historical and symbolic meaning greatly affecting what is understood about the South and southerness. One avenue toward comprehending the postsouth and southern rhetoric depends on looking at southern rhetoric as parody in order to solve some of the problems so entrenched within southern oratory.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the prolific Waldo Braden left a mark on the area of southern rhetoric. This mark traces back to the ideas of Dallas Dickey, Richard Weaver, and the Vanderbilt Agrarians – all familiar ghosts to southern public address scholars. Braden's research developed and solidified southern public address for years to come. Yet Braden's work never quite reached the point of exploding the southern rhetorical canon for those left outside the canon due to definitions of South and southern perpetuated by the Agrarians and later Dickey. By defining the "South" and "southerness" from the white, patriarchal perspective so associated with the Agrarian and Weaver perspective, certain assumed standards became connected to the canon of southern rhetoric. The emphasis became preservation of the Agrarian southern perspective, not additional broadening of a canon that represented the South at large. This preservation inevitably led to the neglect of additional voices not fitting the Agrarian/Weaver viewpoint. Southern rhetoric found itself haunted by the definitions, canon limitations, and research revisited by Braden. As a result Waldo Braden is now synonymous with works in southern rhetoric. He haunts the writings of contemporary scholars, such as Stuart Towns, Stephen Smith, and others trying to assimilate the past in the present, a theme not uncommon within southern culture. The associations with Braden, Weaver, Dickey, and the Agrarians are so familiar, so comfortable, that we

hardly notice their limitations and agendas. Without a renaissance, as experienced by the rest of public address studies, southern rhetoric remains unexorcised of the ghosts – especially Braden -- haunting the scholarship. I propose parody as one way to exorcise these ghosts. Parody provides a way of including the historical consciousness of southern rhetorical scholarship without depending on just the traditional neo-Aristotelian method or analysis of southern myths. Parody also encourages viewpoints outside a particular southern perspective by enlisting difference into the analytical equation.

While the idea of ghosts and hauntings describes in rather dramatic terms the associations from one southern scholar to another, Harold Bloom identifies "anxiety of influence" as a theoretical perspective of the connections between generations of scholars and scholarship. A literary critic, Bloom argues an anxiety of influence exists in all poetry. Basing his theory on those of Nietzsche, Freud, and even Plato, he sees poetry and poets in a type of family tree where each poet is influenced by those that came before him.[2] As the new poet, or ephebe, creates he must both learn from the father while also striving to be different from him. The poet does this by "misinterpreting" the poem by the father poet. Misinterpreting is necessary to produce originality. This tension generates the anxiety of which Bloom speaks, an anxiety that forms itself as the poem. Bloom denies any categorical distinction between the poet and the critic: "Poets'

[2] I am using the male pronoun here for two reasons 1) Bloom's discussion is male based. Gilbert and Gubar wrote a counter feminist critique of Bloom; see Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). Bloom however, is basing his critique on a male model of genealogical artistic creation. 2) The critics of which I speak are predominately male which fits into the southern definition and ideological perspective discussed throughout this project. Female critics remain under represented in southern rhetorical criticism.

misinterpretations or poems are more drastic than critics' misinterpretations or criticism, but this is only a difference in degree and not at all in kind."[3]

Bloom's description of the struggle for originality is aggressive and, I would argue, violent. It necessitates a literal fight with the past in order to revise the previous poet, or critic, for the originality of the new poet. Bloom gives several strategies that all involve an aggressive act on the part of the ephebe to misinterpret the preceding poet/critic while "either denying influence or professing reverence."[4] Misinterpretation allows the poet or critic to claim his own voice, and in turn his existence. Bloom's connection to Freud's Oedipal theory is apparent; for the critic, life itself relies on the misinterpretation of the previous critic – an alteration of the previous life: "True poetic history is the story of how poets as poets have suffered other poets, just as any true biography is the story of how anyone suffered his own family – or his own displacement of family into lovers and friends."[5] According to Bloom, therefore, every critical act changes that which it interprets even when the new critic tries to remain faithful and accurate to the preceding text: "Every poem is the misinterpretation of a parent poem. A poem is not the overcoming of anxiety, but is the anxiety."[6]

As southern rhetorical scholars attempt to step away from the "father" and his ghosts they remain a part of the very influence they wish to escape. Without a renaissance to exorcise the same repeated inventions and canon, these scholars seem to reproduce, with only subtle changes, the "mistakes of the father" and, in turn, make these mistakes their own. As a result southern rhetorical critics become both the haunted and

[3] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 94-95.
[4] "Harold Bloom" in the *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2001), 1795.

the haunting, or as Bloom would argue the son and the father. The southern rhetorical critics seem doomed to the past through their search for their own voice, their subject of a South fighting its past, and a rhetorical tradition at odds with past definitions and canons. All these pasts haunt critics as they endeavor to re-create rhetorical canons, definitions, and tradition with each generation, or anxiety, another layering of meaning develops.

4.1 Haunting Anxiety in the Research

One of the foremost or "strongest critics" to haunt contemporary scholars is Waldo Braden.[7] To illustrate the implications of Braden's haunting of southern rhetoric and the lack of a renaissance, the next section will show the traces of anxiety in the more recent works of Stuart Towns and Stephen Smith, followed by a listing of the effects such anxiety holds on southern rhetorical studies, and finally discussing how the theory of parody may help critics discover more varied voices and meaning within southern rhetoric. Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody helps uncover the multiple meanings found within texts and scholarship. Such work helps explain the varied meanings found in the postsouth and its rhetoric.

Most of the contemporary scholarship in the southern oratorical scholar tradition belongs to Stuart Towns. Towns follows a long academic line of southern public address scholars. He received his B.A. in June of 1961 from the University of Arkansas. During his undergraduate days Towns was highly influenced by another southern speech scholar, Ralph Eubanks. Eubanks was on the faculty at Arkansas and had been Dallas Dickey's last doctoral candidate. Eubanks is credited for not only his southern public address

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[5] Bloom, *Anxiety*, 94.
[6] Ibid.
[7] I use the term "strong critic" here in reference to Bloom's use of the term "strong poet" -- a phrase representing poets who are most adept at influencing or parenting other poets.

scholarship on the Nullifiers and Ben Tillman, but for several studies on Richard Weaver.[8] Eubanks shares Dickey's view on southern rhetoric as a cultural entity in need of preservation based on the Agrarian view of southern culture. Towns, influenced by Eubanks, works within this idea of preservation. Towns went on to the University of Florida, Dickey's former teaching ground, where he received both his master's and doctoral degrees**.** Towns' dissertation, *Ceremonial Speaking and the Reinforcing of American Nationalism in the South, 1875-1890,* follows the traditional critique of southern oratory laid out by his forefathers. Even quoting Dallas Dickey as calling for more research on southern reconciliatory oratory as justification for his dissertation, Towns acknowledges the basic concept of southern oratory as defined by those who came before him.[9] The academic lineage of Towns' predecessors shows a highly traditional and agrarian based leaning.

While Towns' early work on his dissertation remained consistent with his predecessors, his most recent works on oratory in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries open a few doors in the southern oratorical canon. More so than Braden, Towns is an anthologizer. As Braden preserved southern oratorical scholarship, Towns preserves southern oratory. Towns' recent publications testify to his work in anthologies. *Public Address in the Twentieth- Century South* and *Oratory and Rhetoric in the Nineteenth-Century South* cover two decades and a great deal of southern history. While he works

[8] Ralph Eubanks, "Rhetoric of the Nullifiers," in *Oratory in the Old South 1828-1860*, 19-72. Eubank's work with Weaver covered not only the *Language is Sermonic* book, but also essays on the ethical nature of rhetoric in which he relies heavily on Weaver's basic philosophy of rhetoric. Johannesen, Strickland, and Eubanks eds., *Language Is Sermonic*; Ralph Eubanks, "Reflections on the Moral Dimension of Communication," *Southern Speech Communication Journal*, 45 (1980): 297-312 and "Axiological Issues in Rhetorical Inquiry," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 49 (1978): 11-24.

[9] Stuart Towns, "Ceremonial Speaking and the Reinforcing of American Nationalism in the South, 1875-1890" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1972), 2-3.

preserve southern public address and rhetoric, he is haunted by those views of the South and the southern oratorical canon that come before him.

In Towns' book *Oratory and Rhetoric in the Nineteenth-Century South* lie clear examples of the haunting anxiety handed down from Braden. Towns justifies his work much as Braden justified his early research: "Many observers and historians of southern life have helped to create and perpetuate a descriptive and stereotypical myth of the 'Southern orator.' He is often portrayed as a huckster, a charlatan, a demagogue, or a con man selling 'snake oil.'" Towns goes on to explain that while this description may be a valid one in some circumstances there are also cases of men and women "seeking humane and tolerant solutions to the various problems" facing the South. His goal in this collection is to preserve both the demagogue and the humanitarian. Like Braden, Towns is haunted by the idea that the South remains represented *only* by "demagogues and charlatans." His words echo those of Dickey in 1946 when he took historian Merle Curti to task for describing southern orators as "ephemeral and florid."[10] Braden too is echoed in Towns' words from several of his articles where he questions the perception of southern oratory held by historians, journalists, and anthologists.[11] Once again a southern rhetorical scholar plays defense against the stereotyped perception of southern orators even as he critiques the defensive stance of southern speakers. With this burden of anxiety haunting Towns, he continues to explain that his collection is representative of those that may have fallen in the stereotypical categories as well as those that do not.

[10] Dickey, "Ephemeral," 16-20.
[11] For several of Braden's essays on the subject see *The Oral Tradition of the South*. Of particular interest are the chapters including "The Emergence of the Concept of Southern Oratory" and "The Oral Tradition in the Old South." Another article of interest is Braden, "Southern Oratory Reconsidered," 303-315.

Another place Towns seems tied to ghosts of the past appears in his characterization of the South. In his study on nineteenth-century southern oratory, Towns describes a South that seems continually changing yet remains the same, or perhaps as Tate would put it "historically conscious." For example, in speaking of southern people Towns describes a variety of southerners: "Louisiana oilfield worker, Appalachian mill hand, Saturn car plant skilled technician, Nashville song writer, migrant farm worker, Orlando businesswoman, media evangelist, Gulf Coast shrimper, cotton farmer, urban professional, Ozark 'hillbilly.'"[12] He goes on to claim that these people as well as others make up the southern population. In addition to the people, Towns discusses characteristics of geography and economics, and then turns to Richard Weaver's description of the spiritual side of being a southerner. He then discusses feelings associated with being southern, in particular the "intense ties to place," an overwhelming attachment to "home," and conservative Christianity. Finally Towns mentions the "large presence of African-Americans" and the relationships between whites and blacks that distinguish southern history. As Towns further discusses characteristics of the South he mentions the defensiveness and paranoia that mark southerners at times. He mentions food, music, and language patterns. Then Towns moves again to more ambiguous borders by discussing the "memory" allied with the South. This memory contains the myths and legacies of the South both past and present from reverence of "moonlight and magnolias" and the Lost Cause, to conflicts over civil rights and Sunbelt prosperity. Towns describes a South conscious of its past within its present. In fact Towns' description seems timeless, for the reader becomes uncertain of whether he is describing

[12] Towns, *Nineteenth-century*, 2.

the audience of the nineteenth-century, which he states as his goal, or the southern reader of speech texts today.[13]

The point of examining Towns' description lies in understanding his perspective as a critic and anthologist. He lives in the same camp as those coming before, describing a predominantly white version of the South, holding to the need to preserve the oratory of that South, and in the process canonizing a viewpoint of the South represented predominantly by white male politicians, preachers, and statesmen. Here and there are demonstrations of females and African-American southerners, yet overall the collection is predictable in light of the anxiety from which it comes.

Towns' follow-up collection *Public Address in the Twentieth-Century South* better deals with some of the limitations of the southern oratorical canon, due in part to the time period of the book's subject matter. African-Americans and women were more visible as speakers in the twentieth-century, in part because of their invisibility during the nineteenth-century. While Towns' introduction is more historically based and less descriptive of the South as a cultural entity than his previous work, his list of speeches is more inclusive. Speakers such as women's rights crusader Rebecca Felton, anti-lynching activist Jessie Daniel Ames, civil rights activists Daisy Bates, Fanny Lou Hammer, and Diane Nash Bevel, writer Lillian Smith, and state senator Barbara Jordan are listed along side the generally included southern orators George Wallace, Theodore Bilbo, Orval Faubus, Huey Long, and Jimmy Carter. Several African-American men are also included in a section on the civil rights movement. While Towns makes some headway into the needed changes to the southern rhetorical canon, his work remains just the beginning to further drive southern public address into a much-needed renaissance.

[13] Ibid., 2-5.

While Stuart Towns works to preserve and influence a southern public address canon, Stephen Smith approaches southern rhetoric from the concept of myth. Much as the Agrarians who institutionalized the myths and stereotypes of the south into the discussions on southern literature, Smith joins Braden in discussing myth and the southern mind as a defining characteristic of southern rhetoric. Although Smith's recent work deals primarily with freedom of speech and legal rhetoric, his 1985 work *Myth, Media, and the Southern Mind* introduces a contemporary rhetorical analysis of the myths that comprise southern culture.[14] While Smith concentrates on media over traditional oratory, his critique is no less entrenched in the mindset generated by Braden and Dickey in earlier studies.

The first indication of ties specifically with Braden, whom Smith thanks in his acknowledgments, is the subject of myth itself. While Smith claims to be looking at "contemporary" examples, his tactic for analysis falls under traditional theories of criticism recognized by the Agrarians and Braden. Smith lists and discusses typical contemporary myths about southern culture, but he makes little headway in advancing southern rhetorical studies except for the inclusion of media. Citing historian George Tindall's challenge to examine southern myth, Smith looks for many diverse symbolic references in public address as well as music, television, newspaper, and other similar media. By looking at southern rhetorical discourse, Smith hopes to show changes as well as consistencies regarding the myths of southern culture from Grady's New South era to the Carter Presidency.

The basic problem lies in the need to analyze the South beyond myth and stereotype. Interrogating myths and stereotypes of southern culture does give insight into

[14] Smith, *Myth, Media, and the Southern Mind*.

shifting cultural attitudes. Because such myths are deeply rooted in the Agrarian development of southern ideals and its sometimes ambiguous interpretation makes it a difficult measure of southern change. Past work on southern rhetoric is replete with analyses of southern myths, second only to analyses done in neo-Aristotelian style. Challenging myths and stereotypes, however, involves a large amount of interpretation. While we may find the evidence to suggest a common understanding of particular symbols, the subtle nuanced meanings can be highly individualized. Therefore, myth, while important, also may be manipulated to mean or prove that for which there is little or no empirical evidence. Historian Gaines Foster explains the problems involved when using myth as evidence in the case of the "Lost Cause." He argues that myth seems bereft of a clear definition "within scholarly discourse." Instead, "'myth' is understood to mean everything from a creative falsehood to a disguised message that publicly presents 'ordinary unconscious paradoxes.'" He even goes on to explain that the result of such ambiguity "may confuse rather than clarify the phenomena they are used to describe." This confusion of meaning is perpetuated and complicated by the added problem that myth, because of its most accepted definition in anthropology, assumes a connection to social identity. Concepts and ideals associated with myth imply connections to a people's origins, or as Foster states, "a story that shaped their social identity." To rely so heavily on myth as the primary source for such conclusions leaves too many unanswered and potentially confusing questions and interpretations.[15]

To Foster's concerns I add another. These entrenched myths remain steeped in the past. When looking at contemporary issues, these myths lead the critic to observe changes based on where cultural attitudes were, not necessarily where they are or where

[15] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 7-8.

they are going. For example, Smith mentions the demise of the "southern belle" myth and the rise of the "Good Ole Girl." He makes a similar comparison for men discussing the lack of cavalier myth in current day culture and the concentration on the "Good Ole Boy" myth. Smith is looking at changes where an entrenched stereotype previously existed. His study does little to analyze myths new to the South. Where, for instance, is the portrayal of African American women and men, or Atlanta transients? Smith's analysis starts with the extant myths and makes comparisons to current myths. For example, Smith argues that white supremacy myths were avoided and replaced in the 1970s and 1980s with other predominant white myths. In Smith's South myths are whiteness driven. There is little evidence that blacks, or other people of color living in the South, have been able to control their own mythical representation.

While Smith's analysis may have value on one level, on another it continues to neglect changes and problems in the South that fall outside the mythical past. Smith, like Braden, falls into the trap of keeping past ideals about the South alive by validating them through negation. Smith tries to show the changes in the South over an 80-year period, yet to do this he must revisit the same myths and histories that develop the stereotypes he tries to negate. In doing this, Smith constructs limited theoretical advancement or analysis with which to look at southern culture. Like those who came before him, he beats his proverbial head against the same brick wall built by the Agrarians and mortared by Dallas Dickey.

Smith's defensive stance cultivates myth as a strategy, much like the Agrarians. Although his purpose is not quite the same, much of the effect remains. Smith preserves a vision of the South rooted in myth, analyzed by tradition, and grounded in the past. By

rooting his analysis in the past, Smith continues an Agrarian tradition of being "historically conscious," of using the past to defend and define the present. As a result the current South presumably handles issues better than its ancestors, yet new tactics for analyzing the South have yet to be created.

Smith's analysis of various southern myths appears as a strategy for the defense of the southern history. Just as the Vanderbilt Agrarians chose to communicate their vision of the South through the use of myth, Smith defends his vision of the South by analyzing myth. Smith's book takes on mythical themes of equality, distinctiveness, place, and community providing example after example, through myth, of how the South has become a gentler and better culture. Smith's view shows a South becoming more concerned – or at least as concerned as its northern neighbors – about equality and race, a South changed from its Old South roots yet still distinct, and a South less rural than the past yet still community driven and "home oriented." Smith's South is the best of all worlds, changed where wrong and continuous where right.

While Smith's work has its shortcomings in relation to the grand scheme of southern rhetoric analysis, there are moments, as with Towns, where Smith's work seems to usher in a renaissance. In several instances Smith claims these mythical themes are for blacks *and* whites. This contrasts with definitions of "southern" in past scholarship that tends to refer to only a white South. When talking about equality Smith argues, "The mythic vision of equality and a biracial egalitarian South slowly emerged. . . . For the first time in one hundred fifty years, the South had produced a new myth of its own identity which not only refused to recycle but completely rejected the tenets of the old

mythology."[16] When speaking on the themes of place and community that the South represents, Smith also argues that "Despite the suggestion by some scholars that the contemporary rhetoric of whites and blacks reflects different value systems, the mythic theme of community and place . . . is one shared by both blacks and whites in the contemporary southern mythology."[17] Giving examples of how both whites and blacks have discussed place, Smith concludes the myth is the same for both. Looking at Smith's work twenty years later, one wonders if some type of "second wave southerness" seemed to account for this argument. How valuable is the theme of place and community as a myth when white and black southerners speak of "community" differently? Their experiences of the South as place and home are somewhat different.[18]

Towns and Smith, while haunted by the southern rhetoric and Vanderbilt Agrarian tradition, are making steps to break free of some of the past mistakes of the "fathers." Towns works to include more representation of blacks in the idea of southern rhetoric. Smith somewhat analyzes how blacks are now included in the myths of the South. Yet while both scholars edge toward a southern public address renaissance, they fail to make the leap. Their analysis still includes tones of defensiveness. It also relies heavily on past versions and definitions of the South, and it adds little in the way of new critical invention to southern public address. These three problems are the haunting of those who came before – the voices Towns and Smith keep hearing as they endeavor to break new ground.

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[16] Smith, *Myth*, 91.
[17] Ibid., 117.
[18] Houston Baker discuss the strange a quality for those that are black who call the South "home." Houston Baker, *Turning South Again: Re-thinking Modernism/ Re-reading Booker T.* (Durham: Duke University

4.2 The Problems of Continual Haunting

Several effects continue to haunt southern public address just as Towns and Smith remain haunted by the past in their own analysis. Towns and Smith represent some of the most recent in the genealogies of southern rhetorical studies. While their work strives to eradicate some of the prevailing problems in southern public address, it remains imperfect and incomplete. Three main problems continue to haunt southern rhetorical scholarship. The first is a reliance on traditional methods of analysis, such as criticism of southern myths and neo-Aristotelian critiques, which remain the foremost type of evaluation of southern public address. Second, scholars' attempts to enlarge the canon without exploding it leave residuals of past agendas reflecting white dominance and masculine voice. Last, the overall defensiveness of the South's past and present consistently reflects a connection with the Vanderbilt Agrarian tradition that was intended as a political agenda as much as a critique of southern culture. Each of these problems continues to hold back the advancement of southern public address. By looking at each of these issues, we may then comprehend the continued connections to the Agrarians and Richard Weaver.

The first of the major consequences facing the haunted tradition of southern rhetoric is the overt dependence on traditional approaches to critique. From Dallas Dickey's call in the 1940s to today, predominantly traditional critiques of southern public address remain utilized in the area. Little else contributes to the scholarly inventions of the past. In the area of southern oratory and public address most critiques rely one established categories from work in the 1970s and 1980s. While there may exist things to

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Press, 2001). Baker asks the very question of what it means to a black man to call the South home. His concludes the tension is at the very core of black *being*.

learn by using these critiques other ways of looking at southern rhetoric have been largely ignored. For example, of the few critiques of southern rhetoric using feminist critiques, two are Annette Shelby's analysis of southern women speakers from 1870 to 1920 and Martha Solomon's critique of southern women and the ERA in the late 1970s.[19] While both examples of scholarship add some diversity to the southern public address canon and utilize new ways of viewing southern rhetoric, they remain just two of a limited number of such examples.

The second problem of a haunted tradition is the rigid canon left in southern public address. Stuart Towns' work opens the door to the renaissance by including such speakers as Barbara Jordan and Daisy Bates, yet one wonders what we could learn by more varied and broad analysis of speeches by groups such as southern suffragists, or southern female church women. To anthologize "representative" speeches, as Towns did, helps us see the possibilities for further rhetorical analysis. Many groups remain tokenized because they are merely represented without further developed categorization and critique. As a result the southern oratorical canon fails at the very preservation for which Dallas Dickey asked. While Dickey's call for preservation and analysis benefited a particular view of the South, to advance and explode the canon would actually aid in Dickey's goal to use rhetoric as a way of preserving the history and past of a culture, or in more contemporary terms, southern cultures.

Canon explosion requires looking at the past. While I have criticized the discipline for evaluating the past too much, the real problem lies in the consequences of lingering in the past. The Agrarians promoted a type of "historical consciousness" as a

[19] Annette Shelby, "The Southern Lady Becomes an Advocate," in *Oratory in the New South*, 204-236; and Martha Solomon, "On a Tupperware Pedestal: The ERA and the Southern Experience," in *A New Diversity*

way of bringing back from the past what they considered a proper order and hierarchy. As southern public address evolved it never quite separated from that Agrarian base. My concern for the canon not only encourages going back into the past, but it requires it. The difference is that such an explosion would bring orators to the attention of scholars who may help advance other questions about gender, race, and class that have yet to be explored from a specifically southern perspective.

Finally a southern oratorical study suffers from a defensive voice in the scholarship. Southern public address scholars sound very much like the orators they analyze – looking for ways to validate and vindicate southern history by showing its flaws yet making the comparison to how well we have overcome such problems. This defensive voice remains rooted in an Agrarian tradition. Much as the Vanderbilt Agrarians defended southern life in the hopes of also improving upon it, southern rhetorical scholars have defended southern rhetoric against out-dated myth, stereotyped categories for southern speakers (such as demagoguery and ephemeral and florid), and generalized characteristics of the South (such as racism, ignorance, or poverty). In some ways this defensiveness has pushed scholars forward to ask difficult questions regarding the true characteristics of southern public address and the South. In other instances it halted progressive evolution of the discipline by remaining rooted in rebuttal – rebuttal of history, rebuttal of stereotype, and rebuttal of racism -- instead of creating new and inventive ways of viewing and analyzing the South and its rhetoric.

While the problems in southern rhetorical studies, stagnant ties to traditional theory, a rigid canon, and defensive scholarship, continue to haunt scholars. These three problems are a result of the continued hauntings and influences initiated by the

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in Contemporary Southern Rhetoric, 230-259.

Vanderbilt Agrarians who defined "southern" in terms of a conservative political agenda. The influence of the Agrarians created problems for southern public address. Understanding how the previously discussed problems directly relate to Agrarian ideology requires a look at the influence the Agrarians passed down.

The ideology of the Vanderbilt Agrarians and Richard Weaver greatly influenced the work, perception, and direction of southern public address scholarship. Most of their influence shows evidence of a political vision of the South rooted in conservative Agrarian values. As southern public address scholars researched and wrote about the South they became affected by the Agrarian agenda. To summarize the various influences haunting southern rhetoric, I will briefly synthesize characteristics passed down, from father to son, within the anxiety of southern rhetorical scholarship. Such matters include the narrow definition of "southern," the continual ties to mythic and neo-Aristotelian theory, a rigid canon based on the narrow definition, and the resulting defensive tone tied to a conservative ideology. All these aspects tied to southern rhetoric remain as a direct result of the Agrarian belief system and its transcendence from critic to critic.

First, southern rhetoric scholars remain influenced by the narrow definition of "southern" that was meant to support a conservative agenda. The Agrarians, as well as Weaver, maintained a belief in social order and lifestyle that favored an elitist ideal. The Agrarians, tied to their memories of the Old South, entertained a white, male, paternal view of rural lifestyle and poetic spiritualism maintained by ties to agriculture over science. Weaver, influenced by Platonic ideals, encouraged the South's ties to Anglo-European culture as the ultimate ideal. Both the Vanderbilt Twelve and Richard Weaver

favored a white, male view of what it meant to be southern. This definition of "southern" influenced the development and concept of southern rhetorical studies.

While the traditional definition of "southern" stands in the way of scholarly development, the problems are compounded by a narrow theoretical focus that also favor such vantage points. The extensive use of neo-Aristotelian method and analysis of myth continues to preserve many of the values upheld by the agenda of the Agrarians and Weaver. Based on a theoretical stance that favors the white, male perspective neo-Aristotelian method remains limited in its scope and potential. While scholars may still gain much from this perspective, neo-Aristotelianism becomes much more limited as the primary and dominant perspective.

Mythic analysis remains based on symbols and meanings rooted in a past. In southern studies such analysis may help scholars understand some changes, but only as those changes are related to the past. Such understandings carry on the "historical consciousness" rooted in Agrarian beliefs and motivations, which validated Old South hierarchies of race, class, and gender. Therefore, new mythic meanings reveal themselves only in the sense of their connection with other past myths, which, through negation, maintain the same mythic base. Like neo-Aristotelian analysis, myth analysis may be useful for some things. However, it still has limitations. For these reasons then, scholars need to reach for more revealing and diverse forms of analysis and theoretical footing.

The definitional problems with "southern" and theoretical and methodological applications all contribute to the need for a more diverse and representative southern public address canon. The current anxiety of influence leaves southern public address

with a rigid canon of politicians, preachers, and spokesmen who represent the dominance of white male speakers. As other areas in the humanities work to unearth texts and histories of women and minority groups in order to diversify voice and viewpoint, rhetoricians, the very advocates of speech, still hold to a canon in southern public address with little female or minority representation. Admittedly, a few scholars search for the representation of less dominant voices but their attempts still yield few results on the perception of southern rhetoric as a dated and traditional area of public address. This perception of southern rhetoric as a rigid canon that seems to have fallen out of theoretical favor leaves other areas of the academy doing the archival scholarship our own discipline seems to leave behind. For example, a major work introducing and analyzing Confederate rhetoric came from a dissertation not in communication studies, but in history.[20] Other such examples exist where other departments within the humanities see the interest and need for more southern studies research in areas where our discipline should lead the way, but instead has ignored the need in recent years.

At the heart of many of the problems of southern rhetorical studies lies the defensive tone in which scholars, at times, try to defend not only the South, but also the moral integrity of southern culture. Dickey wanted southern oratory considered a clear part of American public address. He also wanted to see this oratory preserved as a part of history. Braden utilized southern rhetorical studies as a way to defend public address against misinformed scholars of other fields. Smith used myth to defend the South against much of its past racism and cultural stereotypes. Towns, like Dickey, defends the southern orator against stereotypes and works toward cultural preservation. All these

[20] Karen E. Fritz, *Voices in the Storm: Confederate Rhetoric, 1861-1865* (Denton: U of North Texas P, 1999).

scholars are haunted by the "sins" of the South's past. Like the Agrarians they fight to defend southern culture against its history. Like Weaver, they seek to find some type of lesson or moral to vindicate the South. The defensive tone is evidence of a need for clarification, purpose, and place. The scholars of the past continue to haunt the anxieties of present scholars in defending the sins of the South.

4.3 Re-Conceptualizing Southern Rhetoric

Future southern rhetorical scholars may take many directions. However, to decrease some recreated anxieties of the past, scholars will need to re-examine their focus and direction. This type of "exorcism" from the ghosts of the past cannot completely remove their influence, nor do I wish it too, but may redirect and redefine how southern rhetoric is both analyzed and perceived. Admittedly, a "renaissance" for southern rhetoric takes time and effort on the part of many scholars. The following are suggestions for future directions into southern rhetorical scholarship in order to help re-conceptualize the area of study. Examples in the next chapters show how these suggestions provide new insights and avenues for an area of scholarship haunted by past anxieties and a narrow ideological viewpoint creating major problems. Yet these very anxieties and ideologies gave us a tradition helping to identify and develop the area of southern rhetoric even though it suffers from multiple problems. The South's own history recognizes a tremendous connection to "tradition" and conservative values; such examples of analysis from a traditional or conservative vantage point may therefore deem itself appropriate. For these reasons, I wish not to jettison traditional, albeit conservative, approaches to southern rhetorical discourse as developed by much of southern rhetorical history. Instead I wish to combine traditional approaches with contemporary critical rhetorical

concepts in an effort to add diverse viewpoints and even a variety of ideologies to the discussion of southern culture and specifically southern rhetoric and discourse. To achieve broader and more diverse perspectives I recommend a few basic directions: 1) the greater use and diversity of contemporary and critical theoretical stances, 2) a careful re-examination of the definition of "southern," 3) an explosion of the current canon based on a new definition of southern, and 4) a less defensive and more evaluative tone for southern rhetorical scholarship. While these recommendations alone remain only partial solutions, they help poise southern rhetorical scholarship on the edge of a public address renaissance of which Lucas boasts.

4.4 The Postsouth through Constitutive Rhetoric and Parody Analysis

Obviously, moving southern rhetorical studies into a public address renaissance takes more effort and scholarship than this dissertation can provide. What I wish to propose are ways of looking at southern discourse while also allowing for the variety of viewpoints that make up southern culture and identity. To aid in this endeavor three theoretical perspectives will be used together as a way of bringing forth some of the issues previously mentioned now affecting southern rhetoric. These perspectives include identifying southern rhetoric as postsouthern, a term borrowed from southern literary analysis, acknowledging ways in which southern rhetoric is constitutive rhetoric, and analyzing the viewpoint of those outside the constituted audience through a theory of parody. All three of these approaches help address the different issues associated with southern public address studies, while also helping to define the particular southern rhetoric within the context of its own situation and point in history.

4.4.1 The Postsouth

Southern literary studies discuss issues associated with a "postsouth," a term seemingly originating with critic Lewis Simpson and expanded by Michael Kreyling. Postsouth refers to southerness in two ways. First, historically southern identity depends upon a created role for the South as the keeper of a "vision of social order at once strongly sacramental and sternly moralistic."[21] The South's unique harboring of this social order stretches back to the history of slave and slave owner, free and bound. At that time the paternalistic, white dominant system was upheld as a sacred hierarchy with moral and honorable motives. Early twentieth-century arguments held the system as rooted in the golden European standard of Western Civilization and the argument appears in the Agrarian manifestations in *I'll Take My Stand*. The Vanderbilt Twelve looked to Europe as the gold standard, modeling their South after an elitist white patriarchal standard with a rural lifestyle. Southern cultural critics later went on to espouse the "moral fallibility" of the Old South, and yet still clung to the sentimental view that the South could be represented by a unified voice.[22]

The difficulty in narrowing down meaning of southern symbols and narratives is the dilemma of the postsouth narrative. Literary critic Michael Kreyling, as well as others, acknowledges this problem as one southern literature must tackle by realizing the layering associated in postmodern southern culture. By the term "layering" I refer to many of the same characteristics associated with what the Vanderbilt Agrarians termed historical consciousness and what other southern scholars have refereed to as the "past in the present." The problems with all these characteristics are at the core of what is meant

[21] Simpson, "Closure of History," in *The Brazen Face of History*, 255.
[22] Ibid., 256-258.

by a postsouth. History layers meaning upon cultural representations to the point that the representations lose their referent. Thus, when left to define *southern*, postmodern critics find it problematic to determine any natural or authentic terminology. As critic Michael Kreyling states: "It has been used so much, invested with so much meaning, that we can no longer distinguish between what if anything is inherent and what other interests have attached over time."[23] Kreyling goes on to comment how critic Frederic Jamieson would say, "'southern' has fallen victim to the inexorable critical-economic process of commodification: 'Post-modernism is what you have when the modernization process [commodification] is complete and nature is gone for good.'"[24] The critic of southern rhetoric at one time could take for granted the understood definition of southern and what that meant, as a definition tied to Agrarian ideals of white male patriarchy. Now, however, the need to hear from other voices not associated with past accepted definitions of "southern" requires scholars to comprehend the many contexts associated with the South. This includes an acknowledgement of not only the history of the South, but whose history and through whose eyes the layered meanings develop. The Agrarian, white, patriarchal, heterosexual, paternal South can no longer be assumed *the* voice of *the* South.

As history and nature have proven, the unified voice of the "One South" was as much a myth as the unified Confederate South, the Yellow Dog South, or even the Dixiecrat South. At no time did these voices speak for everyone, but more often than not mythologized the voice of those in power at the expense of those left unheard. Much of southern rhetorical scholarship has been influenced by the voices of the Agrarians, a

[23] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*, 155
[24] Ibid.

group whose "voice" still rings out today, and yet other more diverse influences on southern cultural studies have remained silent within the scholarship. To recognize these silenced voices requires a concentrated effort to move from the past South to an acknowledgement of a postsouth.

This movement from past to post involves a concession to the second characteristic of a postsouth viewpoint, the meaning of "South." As history developed signifiers comprising what was considered southern culture, just as quickly southern culture became the signified. For example, as Robert E. Lee became a signifier for the South he just as quickly became signified by other symbols such as the Confederate flag or Appomattox, or even his horse. Part of this change is due to the problem of what signifies southern. Once a South indicated by rural lifestyle, slavery and racism, and economic poverty associated with a working South, now is replaced by a southern culture of leisure. The things that now represent southern culture are no longer tied to a geographical and economical difference in work-style; work is much the same as anywhere else in the country. Instead the South now offers a southern leisure culture based on NASCAR, music, food, sport, and social gatherings.[25] Such a shift in southern culture also affects the identity associated with the culture. This change seems to blur lines of geography and type to such a point that much remains unclear as to the influence of the South on the rest of the nation and the influence of the rest of the U. S. on the South. The result of this idea of "postsouth" is that the identity previously associated with southerness is much more vague, confusing, and in some cases completely ambiguous.

Another characteristic of the postsouth is one of repetition and mass reproduction. *The South* as a culture, heritage, way of life, descriptor of hospitality, political entity, or other of any number of uses, has come to represent such a vast number of things to so many people that "South" has lost much of its meaning. Historical and cultural layering leaves "South" with a confusing number of definitions depending on context, speaker, and historical placement.

Waldo Braden initiated a look toward the postsouth when he turned the southern rhetorical canon upon itself by trying to identify what indeed it meant to call a speech southern rhetoric. The very question changed the focus from an external one, finding southern speeches and anthologizing them, to an internal one, looking for the connections within the canon. Since that time contemporary scholars such as Towns and Smith remain caught looking for the past in the present – applying the mythology of old to constructs of today. In this "past in the present" construct lies the crux of their "anxieties of influence," which continues to limit both the scope and definition of southern rhetoric at large. Realizing the current state of the postsouth also acknowledges the past as affecting the present while simultaneously accepting more than one version of the layered meaning. In other words the doors are now open for more varied critiques to be applied to southern rhetoric as well as southern studies at large.

As an example of such critiques, the following chapters provide analysis from a specifically southernist perspective. These case studies are specifically southern and by analyzing them as southern texts, we can begin to develop a framework for comprehending the rhetorical nature of southern identity. Recognizing southern identity

[25] Credit for this observation goes to historian Gaines Foster who mentioned this distinction in a discussion panel held at the Southern States Communication Association Conference in Baton Rouge, LA April 4-8,

as a rhetorical construct provides the necessary basis for defining "South" as something fluid and even contextually created, as something inherently political. In the following analysis, however, I intentionally attempt to avoid fixing or binding the terms southern and South by advancing my own definition of the terms as contextual and layered.[26] If, as I have argued, the South as well as southern rhetoric is distinguished by its marginalized status with regard to an equally stereotyped and mythical "north," then what Edwin Black calls the "tokens" of that marginalization will be evident within the rhetorical texts. Through a rhetorical reading of these three case studies, we can begin to describe southern identity as something contextual, as a rhetorical and political practice. By identifying and framing how southern identity works rhetorically, we may then show the diverse voices and experiences present in southern public address but neglected in traditional critiques of American public address, which in turn, allows access to definitions of the South which are more inclusive. Such definitions are needed in order to capture the politics or ideologies associated with Agrarian-based definitions which further mythologized the Old South and the "southern way of life." Several significant themes emerge from the previous meta-critical analysis of southern public address. If southern public address was indeed formed, theorized, and preserved by critics with a southern political agenda, the question then arises, to what extent does this vision of southern public address actually exist in contemporary cases? Furthermore how can those who were not included in the traditional frame be accepted and evaluated? While no dissertation alone can completely answer such significant questions, we can begin to

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[26] By "layered" I am referring to the process described by both Kreyling and Hutcheon of how terms with histories come to mean and refer to so many different things within that history. As writers, critics, and as artists re-use these terms they are re-defining the term to mean something slightly different by playing on

take some steps to categorize southern public address from a specifically southern perspective. Such a study requires questions referring to the postsouthern position of public address as well as inter-relational connections between rhetoric, identity, ideology, and southern public address.

4.4.2 Constitutive Rhetoric

To aid in these relationships, this study will advance the work of Maurice Charland and his essay on the *Peuple Quebecois*.[27] Much like the South, the Peuple Quebecois identified with being a separate culture from the rest of the Canadian nation.[28] The attempt made by Quebec to separate itself as a politically independent entity deals directly with issues of rhetoric, identity, and ideology.

Taking his cue from Kenneth Burke that identification works as an alternative to persuasion within the rhetorical process, Charland addresses the issue of audience in this process. For Charland the audience, not existing as a subject prior to rhetoric, comes into being with the discourse, or rhetoric. The rhetoric and its context bring the audience into being. This process is evident through the recognition the audience has of itself as the subject of the discourse. The audience then "answers" the discourse as the subject. This perspective contrasts with prior rhetorical theoretical stances that took for granted an audience as coming into a rhetorical situation with preexisting beliefs, attitudes and values waiting to be persuaded through rhetoric. Charland's audience comes into being

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both its historical meaning as well as its current context. In other words, layering is referring to the past in a new present context.

[27] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Quebecois*," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 133-151

[28] There are many comparisons between Quebec and the American South especially by secessionists and regionalists who would prefer the South be given independent status. For more development of one such group see Chapter Five.

as the rhetoric unfolds. The very act of attending to the rhetoric as an audience, identifying with the rhetoric, brings the audience's ontological existence forth.

In reference to southern rhetoric and southern identity Charland's theory helps explain why John Shelton Reed's definition of a southerner as "someone who believes themselves to be a southerner" is true. When discourse calling to southerners is put forth, those that answer the discourse in that moment recognize, or identify, with the naming of southerner. However, it is the rhetoric within the context of that moment that brings the identification into being. If indeed what Charland proposes is true, then the question most in need of answering for southern public address is not what is said in a rhetorical situation, but how rhetoric constitutes or helps an audience experience itself as a particular audience, or in this case as southerners. Charland uses Athens as an example of the consequences of this theoretical position and the discussion of persuasion. To help make the same point about southern audiences I am substituting the words South, southerner, and northerners for Charland's use of Athens, Athenians, and Lacedemonians: "If it is easier to praise *the South* before *southerners* than before *northerners*, we should ask how those in *the South* come to experience themselves as *southerners*. Indeed, rhetoric to *southerners* in praise of *the South* would be relatively insignificant compared to a rhetoric that constitutes *southerners* as such." An understanding of constitutive rhetoric helps to answer the question how southerners experience themselves as southerners, or in other words why they answer, in a given situation, to the call of "southern."

Constitutive rhetoric, therefore, is a rhetoric that identifies or constitutes a "people." Referencing Edwin Black's discussion of the second persona, Charland

explains that the audience comes into being, but adds to this that constitutive rhetoric clarifies the ontological status of the audience and the speaker as being created at the time of rhetorical interaction. This status, or being, created by the rhetorical situation makes possible the identification of the audience to the speaker, therefore, creating what Burke terms consubstantiality. Charland argues: "Burke moves toward collapsing the distinction between the realm of the symbolic and that of human conceptual consciousness." Due to this ambiguity in the formation of audience, we must "consider the textual nature of being."[29]

For this explanation Charland turns to Louis Althusser as a way of explaining how subjects, or the audience, become "inscribed" into ideology – a process Althusser terms "interpellation." Charland explains the connection between ideology, constitutive rhetoric, and audience: "Interpellation occurs at the very moment one enters into a rhetorical situation, that is as soon as an individual recognizes and acknowledges being addressed. An interpolated subject participates in the discourse that addresses him. Thus to be interpolated is to become one of Black's personae and to be a position in a discourse."[30] The process of identification is ongoing. It does not stop with one "hailing" or calling forth. As individuals we have prior socialization identifying us with a label, but in the rhetorical moment we come forth as an audience. Prior socialization may be required for an audience to be. In this way then, identification is fluid and ongoing.

In the case of southern identity, southerners may recognize themselves as such by attending Bar-B-Que's, flying Confederate flags, or going to church every Sunday, but

[29] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 133-134.
[30] Ibid., 137-138.

their recognition as southerners when "hailed" by a southern speaker requires them to re-identify themselves as such. Such "hailing" generally takes place within the narrative discourse, which plays the role of vehicle for ideological consequence. Quoting rhetorical scholar Michael McGee, Charland makes the point that, "a 'people' is a fiction which comes to be when individuals accept living within a political myth."[31] Southerners identify themselves as such depending upon the narrative and their re-identification with it. Through this narrative a people gain their history. History is available to us in textual form through narrative. Herein lies the "layering" of a postsouth history. In the case of southern identity narratives are discursively layered, keeping identification fluid. The concept of "southerner" is found within these rhetorics, or layered narratives and histories.

Charland argues that there are three ideological effects of constitutive rhetoric. The first one is that the audience is interpellated as a people; it exists as a collective subject. The second effect is that constitutive rhetoric gives the illusion of communication between the living and the dead, thereby creating a transhistorical subject. In other words the "people" as a subject are written into history through pronouns such as "our" and "we" when speaking of historical times and events. Finally the third effect of constitutive rhetoric gives the illusion of freedom. Audiences are constrained by the narrative telos of constitutive rhetoric, but situated to believe that they have the ability to act. Their actions are constrained by the narrative's boundaries of constitutive rhetoric. The audience, or subject, exists within the framework of the narrative, or context of their narrative history. Subjects are not free to act outside their

[31] Ibid., 138.

narrative, for it is the narrative that calls them into being. The very existence of the subject depends on the narrative constraints.

In order for constitutive rhetoric to be successful a two step process must take place. The audience members "must be successfully interpellated," and second, the subjects of the narrative must act in the outside world in ways validating their place as subjects: "the tautological logic of constitutive rhetoric must necessitate action in the material world."[32] So while subjects come into being through rhetoric, they must continue the fluid process of re-identifying themselves within the social world through action. Charland cautions us to remember that we are all subjects of multiple rhetorics such that our subject positions are changing, shifting, and fluid: "Successful new constitutive rhetorics offer new subject positions that resolve, or at least contain, experienced contradictions. They serve to overcome or define away the recalcitrance the world presents by providing the subject with new perspectives and motives." The subject position of southern is a result of a tension between the past and the present in regard to the various histories of the South such as the institution of slavery, the Confederacy, the Civil War, the contrast to industrial and agrarian lifestyles, or the Civil Rights Movement. The list goes on depending upon the identity associated with the history, for histories of the South do indeed conflict and yet southerners still identify with some histories enough to still recognize themselves as southerners.

In the case of the South, however, the label "southerner" has been around so long and had reference to so many different things that understanding how people identify themselves as a southerner becomes very difficult. For this reason, looking at the postsouth rhetoric requires more than just examining those southerners who acknowledge

their connection to a southern speaker. The complexities of postsouth identity require the analysis of those who fail to identify with a speaker's construct of the South. Just looking at any one historical speech may give a glimpse into how southern identity was formed at that particular moment, as Charland's constitutive rhetoric does, yet constitutive rhetoric does not explain how an identity as loaded as southern identity is accepted and rejected through the many interpretations of historical layering within the narrative. To see a speech by Henry Grady as an explanation of southern identity today is illogical. And yet, just as Grady addresses the past in the present of his New South Speech of 1895, so too do current speeches deal with issues of the past in the present to an even greater extent.

4.4.3 A Theory of Parody

Understanding the South and its layering and meaning invites a look into Linda Hutcheon's postmodern theory of parody as a way to look at the layering of the very narratives that constitute southerners as such and why some southerners may reject certain constituted rhetoric. Although other critics in southern literature, such as Michael Kreyling and to a lesser extent Lewis Simpson, already discuss parody as helping explain the postsouth, southern rhetorical scholarship lacks the benefits of this method.

To deal with the layerings that make terminology in the postsouth so loaded, parody gives rise to the ability to turn representations on themselves as exaggerations. Parodies are not new to southern culture. In 2001 a copyright case developed over a parodied version of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* entitled *The Wind Done Gone.* The recent success of the movie *O' Brother Where Art Thou* not only parodied Homer's travels of Odysseus, but the Jim Crow South as well while it also ironically brought a southern signifier, Bluegrass music, to the American mainstream. And the

[32] Ibid., 141.

recent release of the movie *Dukes of Hazard* will again parody small town, South and its Appalachian heritage. Probably one of the most successful parodists of southern culture is comedian Jeff Foxworthy and his "You might be a redneck if . . .." routine which tends to make fun of poor, white, rural southerners who not only get the jokes but relish in their own parodies by supporting Foxworthy's success.

In literature the term parody refers to a device allowing an author to imitate a particular style, story, or technique. Applying this to the postsouth exposes many of the layers of meaning associated with a southern symbol. This definition, however, does not take into account the multiple uses of parody now taking place in cultural and artistic "texts." Theorist Linda Hutcheon argues any codified form exhibits the potential to "be treated in term of repetition with critical distance and not necessarily even in the same medium or genre."[33] She goes on to describe the scope of parody as one much broader than the typically viewed association with comic literature and drama. Rhetoric and discourse, with their close ties to literature and history, open doors for potential parodied analysis. Little discussion in rhetorical studies focuses on parody as a serious venue to uncover cultural meaning buried one upon the other.[34] While the traditional use of parody falls under this scope of amusement or entertainment or comedy, Hutcheon argues for a parody of broader scope including both the funny and the serious or even the angry.

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[33] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, Inc.,1985), 18.

[34] A few examples survive in journal manuscripts of editorial cartoons, rhetoric, and political campaigns; however, all of these examples see parody as a humorous exaggeration. For these examples see Janis L. Edwards and Carol K. Winkler, "Representative Form and the Visual Ideograph: The Iwo Jima Image in Editorial Cartoons," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1997): 289-310; Barry Alan Morris, "The Communal Constraints on Parody: The Symbolic Death of Joe Bob Briggs," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 460-473; and Barbara Warnick, "Appearance or Reality? Political Parody on the Web in Campaign '96," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15 (1998): 306-324. Gary S. Selby uses parody as mocking, in "Mocking the Sacred: Frederick Douglass's 'Slaveholder's Sermon' and the Antebellum Debate over Religion and Slavery," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 326-341.

She speaks of a parody that criticizes, whether through humor or sobriety, while depending upon the multiple layerings of text to create irony: "Parody, then, in its ironic 'trans-contextualization' and inversion is repetition with difference. A critical distance is implied between the backgrounded text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signaled by irony."[35] In the case of southern rhetorical texts, repetition of considered southern elements such as philosophy, political acts, symbols, or other characteristics may, at times, have ironic possibilities lending them to parody analysis.

Hutcheon agrees with theorist Jay Schleusener that "texts can be understood only when set against the conventional backgrounds from which they emerge; and . . . the same texts paradoxically contribute to the backgrounds that determine their meaning."[36] Parody necessitates the unavoidable dependence of contextualism. For in parody the background is "grafted onto the text."[37] Parody relies on the very layering of meaning and history so prevalent in the South for without a history or a "background" a parody cannot take place. Southern culture, identity, and rhetoric are a kaleidoscope of histories, meanings, and influences. Parody allows the critic to observe the multiple layers associated with these attributes.

Another benefit of parody for southern rhetorical scholarship is the acknowledgment of "hauntings" or "anxieties of influence" within both the text and the scholarship. One major goal of parody analysis is to bring forth these very influences, to acknowledge such histories and to expose various meanings and agendas associated with them. In fact, many artists using parody as a critical tool openly claim "that the ironic distance afforded by parody has made imitation a means of freedom, even in the sense of

[35] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 32.
[36] Ibid., 24.

exorcising personal ghosts – or, rather, enlisting them in their cause."[38] Scholars may use parody as a way to show scornful disdain as well as "reverential homage" for those scholars of the past or cultural meanings of the past. Through its very nature, parody allows the critic to accept anxieties and actually use them for beneficial purposes, while at the same time creating and re-creating meaning: "Parody would then be one more mode to add to Harold Bloom's catalog of ways in which modern writers cope with the 'anxiety of influence.'"[39] Bloom claims that while "anxiety of influence" happens to artists, more specifically writers and poets, that it also affects critics. If, as Hutcheon argues, parody helps artists deal with "anxiety of influence," then parody is a proper analytical tool for critics as well, not so much as a style or technique, but as a guide with which to read other works.

Perhaps in the area of criticism I subtly depart from Hutcheon and Kreyling. Both claim parody for the writer and artist. Hutcheon declares parody an "inferred" technique intended by an encoder. In the examples that follow her explanations all point toward the artist and writer.[40] Kreyling too pronounces parody as the postsouthern tool of the postmodern southern literary writer. He argues by using examples from Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor to more contemporary Barry Hannah and Peter Taylor.[41] I argue parody, as a tool, gives the critic a way to contrast, compare, and to make what is unseen seen. The critic may read for parody between two texts as a way to bring forth the "ironic distance" and "trans-contextualization" of which Hutcheon speaks while also bringing out, through her "anxiety of influence," meaning that does not require an

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 35.
[39] Ibid., 96.
[40] Ibid., 84-99.

"inference" on the part of the author or speaker of the original texts, but on the part of the critic. In cases such as this the critic may create a parody as a contrast between layered and historical texts where one has yet to be placed "intentionally." This is particularly useful to the rhetorical critic of southern public address. To observe and critique postsouth public address one needs a venue that goes beyond showing how the past still exists in the present as illustrated in works of Towns, Smith, and Braden. Instead the postsouth critic needs a way to show how many different pasts are present in various voices and how those voices deal with the layering of many historical views.

Constitutive rhetoric and parody alone can not answer all the problems of southern rhetorical scholarship and its many ghosts and "influences." What it can do is offer an option to critics who may not share the Agrarian view of the South, while also opening the scholarship and public speaking canon to voices otherwise left silent.

The postsouth indicates a South of multiple narratives, voices, and cultural entities. While the issues of power remain in constant flux, the postsouth gives the cultural critic a more solid stance upon which to allow varied and multiple voices into the southern rhetorical canon. The postsouth recognition opens the door theoretically for more critical rhetoric methodology focusing on culture with a variety of voices, discourse, and cultural representations in mind.

With a recognition of the postsouth in mind, an examination of the current southern rhetorical canon shows not only past and current gaps of African American southerners and women, but also missing pieces of the current postsouth cultures which not only includes African Americans and women but may also include the influences of other race, class, and gender specifics yet to be explored.

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[41] Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*, 148-166.

4.5 Conclusion and Case Study Preview

Although haunted by past scholarship and endlessly linked to the past, southern rhetorical studies stands waiting for a public address renaissance. Both Stuart Towns and Stephen Smith have aided in that initial step. While advancement begins, the ghosts of the Vanderbilt Agrarians, Richard Weaver, Dallas Dickey, and Waldo Braden haunt the scholarship of even the most recent work on canon explosion and myth analysis. Canons still show few alternative voices, mythical and neo-Aristotelian analysis still makes up a large portion of southern rhetorical invention, and the defensive posture of scholars in the field cries out for further questions in a different tone. Until scholars stop carrying what C. Vann Woodward described as a "burden of history," southern rhetoric will remain securely tied to the past and in need of analyzing the postsouthern culture of which other literary and historical scholars discuss. It remains up to the future of southern letters to ask questions about the postsouth and test new rhetorical hypotheses. Only then will the viewpoints held by ghosts of the past be joined by other questions, other agendas, and other voices -- their haunting familiarity to become less comfortable in a more varied world.

To reveal the use of constitutive rhetoric and parody as they apply to postsouthern rhetoric the following chapters utilize three examples of "southern" rhetoric with postsouthern applications. The League of the South is a grassroots organization modeling itself after both minority activist groups and Confederate cultural preservationists. Its "southern" roots link back to Old South values and agrarian traditions. However, its successes and failures depend upon the use of past south references in postsouthern culture.

The second analysis is that of former Georgia Democratic Senator Zell Miller. His Republican National Convention Speech in favor of George W. Bush provides a clear case of southern rhetoric with postsouthern qualities. Miller is representative of the traditionally analyzed southern speaker – white, male, political, and Protestant – yet his speech in 2004 went beyond traditional southern rhetorical ideals. The event demonstrates Miller's use of southern demagoguery as a postsouthern demagogue.

The final case study stands out due to the subject matter and the time period in which it occurred. Charlotte Hawkins Brown's novella "*Mammy:" An Appeal to the Heart of the South* appears here specifically because it refuses to meet the requirements of traditional southern rhetoric. Brown's book, written in 1919, describes the story of a loyal slave who remains with her white family long after Emancipation. Brown wrote the book as a persuasive appeal to white female southerners for the better treatment of black domestic help. While Brown's book may be literary the narrative is purely rhetorical. The text allows an analysis of the postsouthern viewpoint as demonstrated by the critic instead of a 1919 audience member. The book provides insight into the uses and limitations of the postsouthern in critiquing historical texts.

Each of these case studies helps us examine how constitutive rhetoric, parody, and the postsouthern work together in the discourse of southern rhetors. Yet these case studies provide more than examples. Their very variety points to the core of southern cultural diversity and the need for new, more revealing critical approaches to apply to southern rhetorical texts. The various time periods, types of texts, and motives challenge the widely accepted idea that southern rhetoric belongs to a different time in rhetorical criticism or that a renaissance for southern public address is not required or desired.

Chapter 5.

The League of the South: Constitutive Rhetoric and Southern Cultural Identity

The past is never dead. It's not even past.

--William Faulkner
Requiem for a Nun, 1950[1]

In William Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust* he describes what some may see as the longing and obsession a generation of southerners felt after Reconstruction:

> For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it's still not yet two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863, the brigades are in position behind the rail fence, the guns are loaded and ready in the woods and the furled flags are already loosened to break out and Pickett himself with his long oiled ringlets and his hat in one hand probably and his sword in the other look up the hill waiting for Longstreet to give the word and it's all in the balance . . . *This time. Maybe this time.*[2]

The desire on the part of Faulkner's fourteen-year-old boy is that of revision, for the war in some way to turn out differently, for the South to win, for history to instead tell of a southern victory. Of course, Faulkner's narrative only imagines the possibility. History cannot be changed, but it can be retold, and the same desire described by Faulkner currently plays out by a group working for the preservation of southern culture and a revision of southern history, the League of the South.

Founded in 1994 by President Michael Hill, the League sets forth an agenda to "advance the cultural, social, economic, and political independence and well-being of the

[1] *Requiem for a Nun* (New York, Random House, 1950): 92.
[2] *Intruder in the Dust* (New York, Random House, 1948): 194-195.

Southern people by all honourable means."[3] The ultimate goal of the group is constitutional "home rule" and cultural secession from the rest of the nation. They plan to create a mass following within the South that will uphold and set forth political policy of a southern nature. Currently the group has many state chapters and is working to increase participation at the county level. Their strategy includes putting their own candidates in office at the local level first and then later at higher levels to achieve some power that would enable them to function as an independent nation. They claim that secession is a chance for the South, whose Christian, populist culture contrasts with the rest of the nation, to gain the independence necessary for southern cultural freedom.

The League of the South gained much attention in the 1990s when South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi all engaged in battles over the meaning and display of the confederate battle flag as a state symbol. During this time the LoS organized flag rallies, masterminded protests, and made statements in the media. The League of the South claims they are not neo-Confederates, but indeed Confederates, with the purpose of gaining southern independence through a non-violent secession from the United States, which they refer to as the Empire.

Although media attention to the LoS has decreased due to a decline in regionalism after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, their discourse still proves to be an interesting study in constitutive rhetoric.[4] As a group they manage to rearticulate symbols from southern historical narratives in such a way that some southerners re-identified with a historical narrative based on a particularly southern viewpoint. This

[3] The League of the South prefers Old English spellings of words to that of spellings by *Webster's American Dictionary.* This preference is an effort to re-connect southern culture to its European roots. As a result of this I have not corrected spellings or indicated misspellings of words within quotes by members of the LoS.

uniquely southern approach to contemporary historical narrative creates a rhetorical situation in which some, but not all, southerners meet the call issued by the LoS. Through a rhetorical analysis of the League's discourse, we gain insight into the diversity and complexity of southern identity. While many people view themselves as southerners in a variety of ways, the League of the South calls forth those southerners who identify with political and cultural marginality and want to change their status.

Part Confederate political army, part Christian advocates, and part Southern Agrarian movement, the League maintains educational activities, encourages home schooling, supports political candidates, organizes protests, and sponsors competitions for southern artists and writers. Concerned over the degradation of southern culture, the LoS works to validate and re-educate southerners about their roots. The LoS believes northern influence and the Empire it supports exist at the expense of southern culture and "way of life." Taking cues from the Vanderbilt Agrarians and Richard Weaver, the LoS wants to fight economic, cultural, and social influences over Southern Agrarian lifestyle. Much like the Vanderbilt Agrarians, whose book they encourage members to read, and Richard Weaver, also on the reading list, the LoS supporters see science and industry perpetuating and aiding northern greed at the cost of a southern culture rooted in Christian values and conservative politics. While some of this may sound like right-wing Christian rhetoric, the League actually claims to view the Christian right as misdirected. Arguing that neither the Democratic nor Republican parties have southern interests in mind and are overly power hungry, the LoS aligns themselves with "strict constitutional" politics. By "strict constitutionalists" I am referring to the League's preference for

[4] Joseph S. Stroud, "Message of neo-Confederate groups lost on many since Sept. 11," *The State*, May 23, 2003.

politicians and leaders who support a literal interpretation of the U.S. Constitution. This view most advantageously supports the LoS position on issues like states' rights and secession, and other issues such as the definition of marriage or the Christian based culture of the United States preserved, in their view, by the constitution.

The League of the South is an important group to observe rhetorically because they illustrate how southern rhetoric operates within a cultural and political movement as an example of postsouthern rhetoric. A group that inherently plays on southern identity during a postsouthern time when the South has come to mean so many different things provides an interesting case in postsouthern identity. The choices proposed by the League to call forth southerners within their constitutive rhetoric demonstrate aspects that are uniquely postsouthern in narrative, for as the League uses traditional southern topics, they are layering southern historical narratives in a postsouthern way. The LoS also illustrates the turn taking place by predominantly white or Anglo groups, who claim a marginal cultural status, other groups along these lines include cultures in Ireland, Scotland, Quebec, Albania, as well as others, who claim a marginal cultural status in need of recognition and preservation of museums, academics, and the arts much like other marginal groups of non-Anglo decent.

While in some ways this argument about how a group may be both white and marginal originates in Southern Agrarian philosophy with the Agrarians, who wanted to preserve southern culture as well, the League of the South performs in contemporary times. Although their rhetoric sounds like that of a predominantly white Christian organization, their approach to persuasion relies on calling forth southern identities layered from years of historical symbolism. Their narrative clearly exemplifies a

constructed southern identity based on parodic layerings of history. Through such layerings this group has turned multi-cultural arguments on their heads by claiming a distinct southern culture at risk as much as other cultures protected by these arguments.

The League of the South relies heavily on their website as a way to call forth both their known audience of members as well as educating other southerners with the League's narrative version of historical and current events. The information found on their website at dixienet.org is a combination of news bulletins, article archives, press releases, political symposia, event calendars, classifieds, reading lists, home schooling curriculums, opinion pieces, and other southern cultural preservation efforts. While all these areas help further the League of the South's narrative, there exist a few representative articles significant for defining and articulating the League's motives and purposes. These articles include "The New Dixie Manifesto," "The Confederate Flag," and "League Core Belief Statement," as well as other articles identified throughout the chapter. In some instances their rhetoric is augmented by historical narratives found in the works, mainly books, of League of the South members.

By analyzing speeches and writings of the group as found in lectures, books, and webpage articles, and also applying theories of constitutive rhetoric and parody, we may gain understanding of postsouthern culture and how grassroots organizations use that culture. To begin this process I will examine elements of constitutive rhetoric and the theory of parody appropriate to critique the League of the South**.** This examination will show the League of the South tries to create a southern national identity that trumps their audience's U.S. national identity; ironically, however, it's a marginalized identity closely tied to the United States.

The League calls forth an audience through its constitutive rhetoric, and their attempts to bring southerners forth as "a people" results in a three-fold effect. Charland identifies these effects as constituting a collective subject, creating a transhistorical subject, and maintaining a narrative where freedom is illusory. Each of these effects is due to the ideological purpose of constitutive rhetoric.

5.1 Southerners as a "People"

Constitutive rhetoric is based on the formation of "a people" as a collective subject that may not even be agreed upon by those who would address an audience with a particular term.[5] In order for the League of the South to rhetorically constitute a people, they have to define *southerner* in a way conducive both to their mission and to a southern identity. The term southerner means many different things to different people; this characteristic of multiplicity refers to the postsouth time in which southern culture finds itself. The LoS faces the challenge of cutting through postsouth ambiguity to define southerner and persuade such southerners to join their mission, a task directly calling for re-identification of southern identity.

Within the League's constitutive rhetoric three variables play a role in calling forth southerners as "people": separation from the identity of American, the trumping of the identification with being southern over that of being American, and identification with a southern marginal status. These three arguments allow the League to communicate southerness in such a way that, they hope, will supersede the individual connection to America and in turn privilege their identification as southerner. Interestingly, while the League may be able to separate being southern from the cultural

[5] Michael McGee, "In Search of 'The People:' A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (1975): 239-246.

aspects of being American, they end up using the American government and its constitution as a way to achieve independent status. Using the constitution, in turn, re-validates the hold of the United States on the southern region.

5.1.1 Separation

Both Kenneth Burke and Maurice Charland discuss the need for separation in order for identification to take place. Burke points out that identity is the "uniqueness of a thing, as an entity in itself, a demarcated unit having its own particular structure." Charland further discusses how Burke's ideas may be expanded upon when he explains that both the "character and identity of the 'people,'" is open to rhetorical revision.[6] In other words, how the League of the South differentiates southerners as "unique" and how they "revise" the identity of southerners within their rhetorical narrative will greatly affect their ability to constitute an audience.

Several examples help demonstrate how the League develops its separation of southern identity from that of American identity. Most of these examples concern disagreements over the value of southern culture (white southern culture) and what the League would term moral values from a "conservative Christian viewpoint." One example found the Dixie Manifesto illustrates the divide over the value of southern culture as LoS explains how the so-called "contempt" of southern culture manifests itself in the United States "where ethnic slurs are punishable as hate crimes, it is still socially acceptable to describe Southerners as 'rednecks' and 'crackers,' even though Southerners have, in fact, contributed to American culture, high and low, to a degree vastly out of proportion to their numbers."[7] Here instead of merely calling forth southerners, or those

[6] Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 21; and Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 136.
[7] "The Dixie Manifesto" www.dixienet.org

who identify with being called southerners, the League argues that southerners make major contributions to American culture and yet are approvingly disparaged. The League hints here that southerners have not left America, America has left them, thereby showing how *American culture* has separated and isolated southern culture by insulting and demeaning it.

The "New Dixie Manifesto" continues to argue that the United States moved away from values of the South: "The United States is no longer, as it once was, a federal union of diverse states and regions. National uniformity is being imposed by the political class that runs Washington, the economic class that owns Wall Street and the cultural class in charge of Hollywood and the Ivy League." The LoS divides the South from the rest of the country by implicating the United States in the abuse of power and elitism that marginalize southern culture, and in turn southern identity

The LoS must make the distinction clear between being southern and being American. As Burke explains, "If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity."[8] Within their narrative, the League must portray the South and the essence of being southern as being at odds with the United States, most specifically the American government, for their ultimate purpose is to secede from the United States and form an independent sovereign "Southern Republic." To accomplish this rhetorical secession, the League of the South must explain how being southern remains more important than being American.

5.1.2 Trumping

In order to lawfully and "honorably" gain independence, the LoS must work within the confines of the United States Constitution while at the same time calling forth

a southern identity separate from the identity of being "American." Herein lies another characteristic of the constitutive rhetoric; southern identity must trump American identification to fully be a southerner as hailed by the LoS. Any other degree of being southern reveals the varying degrees to which southerners as a "people" are constituted in rhetoric. As Charland discusses, the difference between degrees of constituting a people may greatly affect their right to sovereignty.[9] Several examples show how the League of the South works to constitute southern identity that trumps American identity. In order to develop this argument, the LoS provides examples of "United States tyranny" and they advance a revisionist history. These efforts are done to show that the South suffers from victimization even though it sustains a higher moral ground than that of the United States.

Previously mentioned examples of the League's separation tactic also work to help "trump" American identity as well as separate the South from the United States. Examples of the insults to southern culture and the imposition of liberal "Washington" and "Hollywood" values on the South work to show tyranny as well as promote separation.

Other statements by the League further these attitudes. In their "Core Beliefs Statement" the group gives their priorities, "Our strongest and most enduring earthly affections and allegiances are to those people and places closest to us--family, friends, neighbors, villages, towns, cities, counties, and States." They then contrast their interests in those things to which they hold the weakest of attachments, "far-off abstractions such

[8] Burke, *Motives*, 22.
[9] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 136.

as 'the nation,' 'the environment,' or the 'global community.'[10] This belief statement provides a hierarchy, placing "the nation" at the bottom of the group's list of priorities.

President Michael Hill provides a clear statement showing the tyranny of the United States that offers southerners a moral high ground on which to trump the U.S.: "the voluntary Union of sovereign States given us by the Founders is now a dead thing of the past." Hill declares that the U.S. government works against the U. S. Constitution and, therefore, wrongly asserts power over the southern states. He goes on to describe the results of abusing such power: "The South is now ruled by an alien class and ideology that are completely hostile to our historic way of life. Our values, mores, and ethics are mocked."[11] As in other examples, as the League works to separate southern identity from that of American, they do so to create a hierarchy in which southern supersedes American.

The separation from America, however, is a difficult one for the LoS to make completely. The major support for their argument resides in the U.S. Constitution, which they argue allows for states' rights, home rule, and legal secession. The League consistently calls for "strict constitutionalism" and to "restore the federal constitution," yet the constitution exists because of the United States. The U.S. Constitution defines the existence and structure of a functioning American government. It gives Americans rights and in turn an identity. Looking for some kind of common ground or law within the law that allows the South sovereignty, the League ends up reinforcing the U.S. government's power and voice within the process. Hill, for instance, mentions the abuse of the current government of the U.S. Constitution as reason for southerners to separate from the United

[10] Michael Hill, "League Core Beliefs Statement," http://leagueofthesouth.net
[11] Michael Hill, "Should We Stay or Should We Go?" http://leagueofthesouth.net

States. However, by relying on the Constitution, he ties the LoS to the United States, thereby bringing the relationship full circle.

Another tactic to acquire the moral high ground thus trumping the U.S. government is revisionist history. The League works to revise the history books with sins of the Union – occurring in the past and present. Such revisions include not only the common claim that the Civil War was over states' rights and not slavery, but also that Lincoln was not the Great Emancipator but an evil tyrant, that the South was wrongfully victimized by Union atrocities during the war and reconstruction, and that the North was motivated by greed during the war instead of the moral charge to free slaves. Such revisions vilify the Union, turn southerners into victims, and place moral good on those southerners who currently want to save the culture and its Christian moral basis. Understanding how the League works to revise these narratives gives insight into the constitutive nature of southern identity.

For southerners sovereignty depends on the old argument of states rights, but also on a moral ground that is essential to southern identity. Examples of this include use of the term "cultural genocide," which describes how the mainstream treats southern culture. In contrast the League promotes the culture as one with an overt connection to religion and church going.[12] From a Christian perspective, the LoS supports the southern culture and moral values. Those wishing to destroy or hide southern culture are committing cultural genocide. Additional historical arguments to show the South on moral high ground include revisionist historians James and Walter Kennedy's claim that the northern liberal agenda that runs the country has maintained the South as the poorest

region in the nation while those outside the South exploit southern natural resources without compensation.[13] By illustrating how the South is victimized League members hope to gain the upper hand in the morality debate. While the standard states' rights arguments still abound, the League of the South must maintain a moral stance placing them in the right – since slavery put the South squarely in the wrong. Whether dealing with revisionist history or moral tyranny, the League of the South works to provide a moral high ground on which to position their audience. This moral high ground allows audience members to replace their identification with the United States with their identification as southerners.

5.1.3 Marginal Status of Southern Identity

While the tactics of trumping U.S. identity remain at the heart of this grassroots organization, one other tactic is important to their claims, that of southern culture as marginal. The separation and primary standing of southern identity and culture is important to the overall claim made by the LoS that southern culture is marginal. When speaking of this status, they mention other countries that were dominated by a more powerful government.

In the "New Dixie Manifesto" the authors make comparisons to other countries and cultural identities in Europe that have faced tyranny by a more dominant culture: "American Southerners have much in common with the Scots and Welsh in Britain, the Lombards and Sicilians in Italy, and the Ukrainians in the defunct Soviet Union. All have made enormous economic, military and cultural contributions to their imperial

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[12] "The Confederate Flag: Symbol of Southern Culture, Heritage and Sovereignty. Not Racial Hatred . . ." http://leagueofthesouth.net; and Michael Andrew Grissom, *Southern by the Grace of God* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1999).

rulers, who rewarded their loyalty with exploitation and contempt."[14] Here the authors identify their southern culture with other cultures of European descent. The comparison emphasizes more similarities to these European connections than to current American interests. Other examples include the League's constant reminders that the South was settled predominantly by the Scotch-Irish, another European connection, and that the Soviet Union is another tyrannical country that dominated smaller cultures.[15]

By positioning itself as marginal, and by claiming the moral high ground, the League trumps the United States, as previously discussed. An example of this strategy is provided in the "League Core Beliefs Statement." In this statement the League claims, "that Southern culture is distinct from, and in opposition to, the corrupt mainstream American culture."[16] Because the League of the South has a distinct culture while being dominated by a more powerful cultural entity, its audience may now claim marginal status.

An analysis of how the League of the South calls forth southerners as a people illustrates the complexity of southern identity. The League constitutes a specific type of southerner with particular sympathies. Their tactics include three main ideas, that the United States disrespects southern culture, that to be southern is a marginal status maintained by the domination of the United State government, and that, therefore, being a southerner supersedes identification as being American. Through these tactics, the League of the South works to constitute a southern following.

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[13] James Ronald Kennedy and Walter Donald Kennedy, *The South Was Right!* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1999), 243.
[14] "The Dixie Manifesto," www.dixienet.org
[15] For a discussion of this see League of the South member R. Gordon Thornton, *The Southern Nation: The New Rise of the Old South* (Gretna, Pelican Publishing Co., 2000): 31-40. The connection to European feelings of captivity are also discussed by Kennedy and Kennedy in *The South was Right!*, 8.
[16] "League Core Beliefs Statement," www.dixienet.org

5.2 Southerners through History

Separating the South from the rest of the nation is only part of the necessary requirement for constitutive rhetoric. According to both McGee and Charland, the "people" is "a persona, existing in rhetoric, and not in the neutral history devoid of human interpretation."[17] The existence of the "people" is fictive, rhetorical, and narrative. Therefore, their very being relies on a re-invention or re-interpretation of historical narrative. Furthermore, McGee argues that "generations" believing in a particular version of narrative, or myth, create a new "people," "defined not by circumstances or behaviors, but by their collective faith in a rhetorical vision."[18] In other words, for the League of the South to successfully call into being an audience of sympathetic southerners they must give such a "people" a historical narrative in which to live and believe. The second ideological effect of constitutive rhetoric is the creation of a transhistorical subject. Those southerners called forth by the League must be written into both the past and present. The LoS shows evidence of this through their revisionist approach to southern and U.S. history.

The League of the South makes a concentrated effort at revising southern history and the credentials of many of the members create quite an ethos for the organization. President Michael Hill taught for many years as a history professor at Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Other members such as Dr. Clyde Wilson at the University of South Carolina, Dr. Donald Livingston at Emory University and William Wilson at the

[17] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 138; and McGee, "In Search," 240-241.
[18] McGee, "In Search," 246.

University of Virginia are also college professors in history, philosophy, and theology.[19] Perhaps two of the most visible historians are James and Walter Kennedy. In their book *The South was Right* the Kennedy brothers argue against the "accepted" version of the Civil War. Referring to school textbooks as perpetuating myth, the authors claim the narrative of Civil War history is the result of the Union winning the Civil War and, therefore, the ability to frame the story. Various "myths" are challenged by the Kennedys such as "the South fought the war to preserve slavery," "the struggle for southern independence was a Civil War," "the north was motivated by high moral principles to preserve the Union," and "Lincoln the emancipator." One by one, the Kennedy brothers challenge these myths and give counter-arguments, or narratives, for these facts typically taken for granted. For example, when responding to the belief that the South fought the Civil War to preserve slavery, the Kennedy brothers respond: "This lie has been, and still is, either stated or implied over and over, . . . it is estimated that from seventy to eighty percent of the Confederate soldiers and sailors were not slave owners."[20] Instead, according to the Kennedys, the war was fought over southern independence: "In personal letters the soldiers would express their most private feelings. Occasionally we find these men testifying to the principles for which they were fighting." The history lesson continues through example after example of letters with the words "independence" and "southern independence" emphasized.[21] The book proceeds in this vein of re-writing the narrative typically taught in American history by using various testimonies, historical

[19] All of these professors have participated in the League's Institute and have video lectures available for sale on the website.
[20] Kennedy and Kennedy, *The South Was Right*!, 34.
[21] Ibid., 35.

documents, and quotations to argue against the "American" or "northern" version of history while also re-writing the narrative to show sympathy for southern involvement.

Another example of revision is the League of the South's argument regarding the symbolism of the Confederate flag. Symbolically the League uses the flag to connect their mission to the history of the St. Andrew's cross in the Civil War. The League of the South not only protests the removal of the emblem from state capitals and state flags, they also use the Confederate flag throughout their website and on their logo. The basic argument for using and valorizing the symbol is evident in the "heritage not hate" motto. Defining the flag as a symbol of "Southern sovereignty and independence" for the purpose "solely to symbolize our desire to re-establish the Southern nation as a free and independent Confederacy of sovereign states and to protect and defend the traditional culture of the South," provides the League with a selected cultural revision of the symbol's history.[22] The Confederate flag argument is one of the League's most publicized controversies. In the 1990s when South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia were all dealing with issues surrounding the use of the design of the St. Andrews Cross on state flags and flying over state capitals, the LoS contested the idea that the flag was a solely "racist symbol." The flag then had to be re-defined and re-captured by the League to mean something other than racial bigotry. Once again the LoS revises the typical meaning associated with the Confederate flag as one of racism, to a symbol of southern independence and southern culture. The League also uses the flag as a reminder that southern culture endures a "campaign of denigration:'" "It has been the experience of the League of the South that those who strive to re-cast the Confederate flag as solely a

[22] "The Confederate Flag: Symbol of Southern Culture, Heritage, and Sovereignty – Not Racial Hatred," http//leagueofthesouth.net.

'racist symbol' are inevitably motivated either by historical ignorance or by pure, unadulterated malice towards the South, its symbols, its heritage, and its people." Instead of the flag being an attack on African Americans, the League revises the enemy as those ignorant of or malicious toward the South. The Confederate flag argument furthers the League's purpose under one symbol. It allows for historical revision, or "education," while also pointing fingers toward government and liberal intrusion on the southern culture directly related to symbols of southern sovereignty. Under the League's rhetoric, the Confederate flag transforms from a symbol of racist slave ownership to one of southern sovereignty and "cultural genocide."

The transhistorical subject appears through the League's revisionist history. Their narrative writes in a South that fights for many of the previously mentioned concepts of moral high ground and marginal status. By showing the fight for southern sovereignty as noble and honorable, the League works to draw the attention of southerners called forth as a "people."

5.3 Southerner's Freedom is Illusory

While the League's rhetoric brings the subject (southerners) into being and creates a transhistorical narrative, constitutive rhetoric also results in an illusory freedom. This transhistorical subject is bound to play out the rhetoric's narrative. According to the League of the South, southerners have but one chance of survival and that lies in their separation -- culturally, economically, and legislatively -- from the United States of America. The League explains the need for action in their "Grand Strategy":

> As a means of making real our vision of a Southern Republic, we must first revitalize our largely Anglo-Celtic culture. Without a strong cultural base, political independence will be difficult to attain. But to strengthen Southern culture, we must overcome the mis-education of our people by

> undertaking a campaign to properly educate them about the history of the South in particular and America in general. To re-create Southern society, we should encourage the growth of largely self-sufficient communities among our people. We can develop healthy local communities and institutions by "abjuring the realm:" seceding from the mindless materialism and vulgarity of contemporary American society. To stimulate the economic vitality of our people, we must become producers and not just consumers. By establishing "Buy Southern" programs and by forming trade guilds or associations, we can begin to wean ourselves from economic dependency. By encouraging the use of private sources of finance, such as cooperative loans instead of the Empire's banks, we can begin to break our financial dependency. Once we have planted the seeds of cultural, social, and economic renewal, then (and only then), should we begin to look to the South's political renewal. Political independence will come only when we have convinced the Southern people that they are indeed a nation in the organic, historical, and Biblical sense of the word, namely, that they are a distinct people with a language, mores, and folkways that separate them from the rest of the world.

The "Grand Strategy" gives the southern people a sense of freedom and action, but this must take place within the realm of the historically revised narrative. Only through the narrative of the South's wrongful treatment and their right to independence do the above actions make sense. The "Grand Strategy" presents itself as the rightful choice of a people who have different values and cultural ways than the rest of the country. The actions are seen as free acts; however, this freedom is illusory, for if those called forth as "southerners" do not participate in the "Grand Strategy" then it is assumed they are not really true "southerners." In order to exist, those called must act as narratively directed. As Charland and McGee point out, the narrative makes the "people" real; it gives them a narrative past in which to exist. Due to the need for narrative to make the subject "real," the League has to revise history as a way of writing their subject into being. Charland points out, "that if a 'people' exist it is only in ideology . . . the ideology arises in the very nature of narrative history."[23]

[23] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 139.

The narrative as told by the League of the South also uses the southern concept of the "past in the present" or "historical consciousness" as a way to argue for southern cultural preservation. They try to show that, just as in the past the South was demeaned and considered a "problem" by the rest of America since before the Civil War, history is still very much a part of current daily life. Much like the Southern Agrarians before them, the League of the South consistently reminds southerners of their Civil War and European roots.

The League of the South demonstrates the use of Charland's three ideological effects from their constitutive rhetoric. The first effect, calling forth a collective subject, occurs through the use of three tactics: the separation of southern identity from that of American identity, the recognition of southerner as a marginalized group, and finally the acceptance of being southern as being more important than being American. The revisionist rhetoric used by the League superimposes a transhistorical subject with the same beliefs and concerns as those of League members. The final ideological effect, the illusion of freedom, is bound within the narrative supported by the League. The only real choice for southerners to act upon is that of a southerner supporting the League's desire for secession and state sovereignty. These ideological effects explain how the League gains and maintains some members to its cause. Constitutive rhetoric, however, does not explain the reaction of those who are not called forth as a member of those identifying with "southern" in this way. Because of the postsouth time currently within the South, many who identify with being southern may not conform to the League of the South's view of what southern entails.

5.4 Parody and the League of the South

While Charland argues that a narrative is necessary to bring forth a "people," Linda Hutcheon describes parody in narrative as creating a difference between the parody and what is parodied. Hutcheon's theory helps explain how others may regard themselves as southern while rejecting the League's definition of southern. As Charland explains, the narrative provided in constitutive rhetoric is only effective as long as a competing narrative doesn't call forth the same audience members in a different way. While it is obvious the LoS has several members, there remain many more southerners who have not joined the League or attended its Institute. Parody helps us not only see how the narrative creates a subject, but also the effects and limited success of the constitutive rhetoric compared to competing narratives upon this subject. Keeping in mind Hutcheon's definition that parody is "repetition with a difference," and that parody requires "transcontextualization," we can apply both of these ideas to the constitutive rhetoric of the League of the South. This will allow us to observe not only the ideological effects of constitutive rhetoric as Charland renders, but the compilation of the historical contexts utilized by both the League and the audience of which they call forth as southerners. By looking at some instances where the League endured competing narratives that challenged their viewpoint we can see how the organization may be viewed as parodies of Old South attitudes out of synch with southerners in a postsouth.

Throughout the mid to late 1990s the League of the South claimed close to 10,000 members. Confederate flag issues of the late 1990s and debates over confederate monuments seemed to give some southerners reason to unify under League ideology. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, however, problems arose after

September 11, 2001 when League President Michael Hill wrote a webpage article arguing that the imperial attitude of the United States government had brought about the events of 9/11 as "natural fruits of a regime committed to multiculturalism and diverstity . . . this is America's wake-up call to forsake its idolatry and to return to its true Christian and Constitutional foundation."[24] Hill's comments clearly echoed the League's constitutive rhetoric. Such arguments succinctly call for an identity of southerner over that of American at a time when American patriotism and unity was at an all time high. America had been attacked for the very ideas and values that defined America. Hill's call for southerners as a separate entity from this ideal did not sit well with some members; in fact the rhetoric seemed to contradict the Christian beliefs set forth by the League as a major proponent of their cultural stand. Former League Missouri chairman, Lewis J. Goldberg resigned his position and membership calling Hill's post September 11th comments "un-Christian" and "cold-hearted."[25] Goldberg is just one of several high-ranking members who have resigned since 2001. Goldberg's resignation indicates the problems with competing narratives relying on historical layering. While the constitutive rhetoric of the League of the South calls for southerners, their own narrative calls for "honorable means" and "Christian" based culture. When Hill's rhetoric fell out of the competing narratives of what southern and honorable and Christian meant, League members resigned. While some members may accept Hill's statement as justified others saw him as going too far, as parodying the very values and attitudes associated with the Confederacy and Christian values. His message became interpreted as a type of

[24]Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report, "Neo-Confederates: League of the South loses members and momentum," (Winter, 2001) www.splcenter.org. The original quotation from League of the South President Michael Hill may be found at "RE: The Bitter Fruits of Empire: 11 September 2001" released by author September 12, 2001 www.dixienet.org.

"repetition with a difference." While anti-American feelings may have been appropriate for the Confederacy in 1863, they were not acceptable for southerners in 2001. Hill became a caricature of a Confederate leader without the support and values he was supposed to uphold.

The League's president acknowledges the problem with competing narratives after the 9/11 attacks: "I just think that people were in shock, and they just kind of suspended their lives for awhile." As a result of dampened enthusiasm, League administration changed their strategy to concentrate on "education and cultural issues." "We're trying to get people aware of the true history of America and the true history of the South."[26] This revisionist narrative has been persistent throughout League history. However, the de-emphasis of southern nationalism shows awareness that during national crisis and war many people may identify more readily with being American than with being the League's particular brand of southerner.

Another example of competing narratives is the charge of racism which has followed the League since they appeared on the Southern Poverty Law Center's radar as a "hate group" with potential "white nationalist" leanings. The issue of race remains at the very heart of the Old South parody versus postsouthern values. After all, the very term "Confederate" in some contexts, especially with respect to the South, is reminiscent of slave holders, plantations built on the backs of black labor, and oppression of an entire race. When Hill was linked to statements disapproving of mixed racial marriages, Emory philosophy professor David Livingston resigned as head of the Institute for the Study of

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[25] Southern Poverty Law Center, *Intelligence Report*, "Neo-Confederates," 7/30/2005, http://www.splcenter.org/intel/inelreport/article.

[26] Joseph Stroud, "Message of the neo-Confederate groups lost on many since Sept. 11," *The State*, May, 23, 2003.

Southern Culture and History, the League's educational branch that offers seminars and workshops on "southern" versions of history. Livingston's connections as a "respectable" academic have helped the League's credibility. The organization brags about the professorial members in its ranks. Livingston, however, felt the "racism and 'political baggage'" associated with the group was something to reconsider.[27]

Racism is a particularly difficult issue for the League. Their use of the Confederate flag, Christian only values, and Confederate soldier heroes are all layered in historic meaning. For many southerners these symbols, values, and heroes do not represent the "heritage not hate" message the League tries to convey. This disconnect with some southerners indicates a "repetition with a difference," yet the difference fails to eliminate the racist history associated with these symbols.

At times it appears the League almost invites and challenges competing narratives and the postsouthern layering of meaning that comes with them. A search through their online store at Dixienet.org shows t-shirts displaying Confederate flags with phrases like "Free Dixie, Not Iraq," or "The South, Fighting Terrorism since 1861," and a particularly loaded one, "Question Diversity." They even look to bring George Wallace back to life with "Death is no Excuse, George Wallace 2008." While some southerners may greet these messages with rebel yells, others may wince at the possible implications.

Maurice Charland warns of the fluid nature of identity that is greatly influenced by competing narratives. Connections and similarities of the League of the South with others known to have racist and white nationalist ideology creates problems for those who may see themselves as a "southerner" without the beliefs in racism and white

[27], Southern Poverty Law Center, *Intelligence Report*, Winter 2001, http://www.splcenter.org/intel/inelreport/article.

nationalist ideology. Therefore, the identity associated with being southern remains in constant flux. Much of this fluidity is the result of what Hutcheon terms "layered" histories. As the League of the South revises historical accounts of the Civil War, the reasons for war, the motivations of Abraham Lincoln or the meaning of Confederate symbols each narrative layers upon other references, meanings, and accounts, each affected by the last. And while each of these narratives are about or deal with something in the past (a symbol, event, person) they each alter that thing in some way, thus creating what Hutcheon would call difference.

5.5 The League as Parody in a Postsouth

The League of the South can only exist in a postsouth context. Their loss of membership since September 11th as well as their suspicious connections to racist and white nationalist groups further illustrates the complicated and slippery nature of southern identity. Not only do those who consider themselves southerners find answering the call of southerner as slippery, but those southerners on the outside looking in are able to re-define southerner according to their perceptions of what appears to be occurring within the constitutive rhetoric. Those who do not answer the call, who are on the outside, and who have been separated from the League's southern identity are called everything from Imperialists to Yankees. President Michael Hill, when speaking of League membership, gives an acute description of those considering themselves southerners, but not League southerners. League membership is not for "the weak-knead, the half-hearted, or the lukewarm . . . nor is it for those who wish only to dress up and play soldier."[28] The problem for the League of the South is that, through their layering and revisionism, they have actually become a parody of the very things they wish to

uphold, at least to many of those audience members looking from the outside in, and perhaps even to some of the membership now reconsidering the work of the organization. Calling themselves Confederate, wearing confederate symbols, working to re-write history from a sympathetic southern viewpoint and pursuing a mission of cultural secession from the United States government actually makes this a type of parodic tragedy.

Hutcheon's theory of parody provides a way to analyze how these narratives turn upon themselves as exaggerations, "trans-contextualization," or "repetition with a difference." For the neo-Confederates of the League of the South to exist the Confederate soldiers of the 1861 South also had to exist, and while much has occurred in the South since Appomattox, desegregation, industrialization, voting for women and minorities, as well as a host of other changes, the League of the South exists because of these changes as well. They are not only a parody of "Confederate values," but also of a minority group. Learning the tactics of feminists and civil rights groups, the League incorporates strategies previously used by non-white or female activists. Organizing around church-related activities, revising history to include sympathies toward a powerless voice, and using examples of demeaning treatment of cultural differences are all tactics used by the powerless to gain some authority against the powerful. The irony in the case of the League of the South remains that its members are primarily male, white, and middle to upper middle class, the very group thought to have most of the power in the United States. According to Hutcheon, ironies such as these are signals of transcontextualization, or multiple layerings needed to create parody. The League of the

[28] League of the South, "Remembering Why the League Exists," http://leagueof the south.net.

South illustrates both strategic layering in how it constitutes its audience, but also in the transcontextualization of its historical connections.

The League's use of southern history offers another example of transcontextualization. It plays upon constitutive rhetoric used by the Daughters of Confederate Veterans and the Union of Confederate Veterans after Reconstruction such as flag rallies and Confederate Memorial Days. The League also works to uphold Robert E. Lee, John C. Calhoun and Jefferson Davis as heroes who date back to the days after Reconstruction, while at the same time they vilify current national and state leaders, something those after Reconstruction did not necessarily do. The League of the South however, does not just grant contexts from the Civil War and post Reconstruction; they also pull from symbolism and ideas of the 1950s and 1960s massive resistance during the Civil Rights Movement. All these moments and events in history shape the League of the South and also parody it.

Both Hutcheon and Charland give us an opportunity to understand southern rhetoric in a postsouthern context. Charland allows us to see the three effects of constitutive rhetoric, the calling forth of a collective subject, the transhistorical subject, and the illusion of freedom within narrative, at play in the League of the South's discourse. Using constitutive rhetoric the League of the South calls forth southerners in a revised history and offers a choice of membership within their group. The League runs into trouble when its audience continues to be challenged with a variety of definitions for "southerner."

Hutcheon allows us to understand the League as a parody of a minority group for those who fail to identify with its message**.** The League's dependence on historical

symbols and myths based on Old South values creates a type of parody of the Confederate agenda. The League of the South is an example of southern constitutive rhetoric that, while having some success during times of peace, found that the necessity of US government criticism in war, much less southern nationalism, needed to maintain the southern audience sought by the League failed after the 9/11 attacks. The result of their rhetoric is seen as parody by those not in the constituted audience.

Both their constitutive rhetoric and understanding as parody represent the League's rhetoric as postsouthern rhetoric. The multiple layering of historical meaning creates a context for several understandings to arise from their messages. These examples validate the claim that southern identity is fluid and varied from that of the agrarian based southern identity put forth in the 1930s by the Vanderbilt Agrarians and addressed throughout the history of southern rhetorical scholarship. While this *is* an example featuring a white male patriarchal group, their example of fluid southern identity only necessitates the need to look for other less accepted cases of southern identity found in those given even less of a voice than the League of the South.

Chapter 6

"Give 'em Hell, Zell!"
Senator Zell Miller, Parody of the Southern Demagogue

> Maybe you try and tell 'em too much. It breaks down their brain cells . . . Just tell'em you're gonna soak the fat boys, and forget the rest of the tax stuff. . . Hell, make 'em cry, make 'em laugh, make 'em think you're their weak erring pal, or make 'em think you're God Almighty. Or make 'em mad. Even mad at you. Just stir 'em up, it doesn't matter how or why, and they'll love you and come back for more. Pinch 'em in the soft place. They aren't alive, most of 'em, and haven't been alive for twenty years. Hell, their wives have lost their shape, and likker won't set on their stomachs, and they don't believe in God, so it's up to you to give 'em something to stir 'em up and make 'em feel alive again. Just for half an hour. That's what they come for. Tell 'em anything. But for Sweet Jesus' sake don't try to improve their minds.
>
> Jack Burden to Willie Stark
> *All the King's Men*
> Robert Penn Warren, 1946[1]

On September 1, 2004 Democratic Senator Zell Miller of Georgia gave the Keynote Address at the Republican National Convention in New York City. An angry delivery with Trumanesque "down-to-earth" phrasing made the speech a much-talked about event. Miller's symbolic maneuver, however, as a Democrat supporting the Republican presidential candidate, communicated as much as what he actually said. In 1992 Zell Miller gave the keynote at the Democratic National Convention in New York in support of the presidential candidate Bill Clinton. As a result Clinton won the presidency including the state of Georgia.[2] Thus, Miller's speech at the GOP convention, in support of a Republican candidate gave many people, both Democrat and Republican, pause.

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[1] Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1974), 108.
[2] In Clinton's Biography *My Life* he gives Miller credit for giving him the Georgia vote in 1992. Miller also introduced Clinton to his successful campaign manager James Carville.

Miller's keynote is a product of his southern upbringing and southern Democratic roots. Southerners have a long historical narrative of symbolic secession used to make their point. Miller's symbolism at the GOP convention ranks with this tradition. Yet we do not observe the type of conflict typically associated with the southern demagogues of old. The South is not in the middle of massive resistance to the Civil Rights Movement, nor is it in a hotbed of political turmoil, so why would a Senator from Georgia make such a symbolic and history loaded gesture?

Many attempted to answer the question as to why Miller would give a speech against his own party without switching parties. From editorials to media scrutiny many speculated about everything from sincere beliefs to opportunism and even senility. His use of demagogic strategies in today's national political drama makes his postsouthern rhetoric relevant to this project. Many of the characteristics of southern demagoguery are associated with this speech as well. When the GOP announced Miller as the Wednesday night keynote address speaker, many speculated about his message. His book, *A National Party No More* which came out in 2003, set the stage for many of his remarks. Having already established himself as a "Democrat without a party" Zell Miller provided the Republican Party with someone from the "other side" to support George W. Bush's stands against the Democratic presidential candidate, John Kerry. Indeed, Miller fulfilled his role, but his position as a southerner brings forth more complexities to his rhetoric and symbolic stance than mere support for Bush against Kerry.

Zell Miller acts as a parodied southern demagogue that could only be relevant in this postsouth context. While he too, like the neo-Confederates, utilizes aspects of a constitutive rhetoric, his "mark" was made as a messenger for those who were unhappy

with the Democratic Party and its candidate for president. His rhetoric is postsouthern because the very southern demagogic strategies associated with southern audiences are used in this case to identify southerners and other conservative Democrats for a national purpose. The very use, and perhaps effectiveness, of Miller's southern rhetoric on a national stage indicates a postsouthern forum. Like the League of the South's argument that the United States left and exploited the South, Miller's message stems from the argument that he did not leave the Democratic Party but instead the party has left its southern conservative democratic support.

6.1 The Southern Demagogue as Postsouthern

From the Civil War to the Dixiecrats of 1948 to the rhetoric of George Wallace's presidential bid, southerners have long taken stands by refusing to participate in the status quo. Southern demagogues also held a reputation for fire-and-brimstone rhetoric meant to incite and prejudice. Exactly what characterizes a "southern demagogue" from other politicians remains a much debated, unresolved, discussion. Most scholars agree that the characteristics of race-baiting and scapegoating, appeals to the masses, and others also add some form of flamboyance or showmanship. These attributes, however, seem to occur in varying degrees depending upon the context both nationally and locally.

Most rhetorical criticism of southern demagogues speaks of a group in the past. Speakers like Theodore Bilbo, Huey Long, George Wallace, and Eugene Talmadge are all associated with a time of racial and economic unrest in the South. Speaking today of a demagogue not only makes reference to those who came before, but assumes such "dated" tactics associated with demagoguery could be effective in a postsouth and the nation at large. One of the most striking aspects of the demagoguery of past Souths is

that within the demagogue rhetoric were signs of multiple southern identities: "The demagogues' personal escapades and folksy speeches provided rural white southerners with a means of expressing their feelings about the impersonal forces that affected their lives, as well as their feelings about themselves."[3] In order to address the efficacy of such rhetorical tactics as well as their constitutive power, one needs an understanding of what the term "southern demagogue" means.

In earlier chapters I have argued that the analysis of the southern demagogue further defined southern rhetoric in the Vanderbilt Agrarian tradition. While I still hold that more attention needs to be given to categories of southern rhetoric left out of the canon, the evolution of the southern demagogue in the postsouth gives insight into how demagoguery plays into the constitution of southern identity, or in this case postsouthern identity. Looking into the postsouth demagogue questions assertions made about southern demagoguery in the past as well the regional identity associated with the term. The case of Miller also illustrates the use of "southern" rhetoric not only in the postsouth, but on the national stage as well. The fact that Miller ably parodied demagogue tactics raises the question whether a postsouth demagoguery has emerged along with the postsouth identity and culture.

To begin this analysis I examine the definition frequently associated with the southern demagogue. Logue and Dorgan, former students of Waldo Braden, offer several descriptors and characteristics for southern demagogue.[4] Logue and Dorgan begin by debunking several misconceptions of southern demagogues. Although southern demagogues used some of the same tactics not all held the same political beliefs. For

[3] Raymond Arsenault, "The Folklore of Southern Demagoguery," in *Is There a Southern Political Tradition?* ed. Charles Eagles, (Jackson, University of Mississippi Press, 1996), 114.
[4] Logue and Dorgan ed., *The Oratory of the Southern Demagogues*.

example, while Eugene Talmadge denounced heavy taxation and New Deal support, Huey Long thrived on state funding from taxation and Theodore Bilbo gave support for FDR's New Deal plan.[5] Political scientist Raymond Arsenault asserts a vast difference among many of the southern demagogues who "ideologically, ran the gamut from neo-Jeffersonian libertarians to authoritarian statists."[6] Arensault goes even further to say there was no "uniformity in their responses to economic and social issues of the day." While political beliefs or voting records do not necessarily characterize southern demagogues, what, then, does define someone as a southern demagogue?

The term demagogue typically refers to a negative perception associated with politicians. Some attribute the pejorative nature of the label to "opportunistic" or "insincere" messages meant to rally the common man for votes or support:

> A demagogue is a person who seeks notoriety and power by exploiting the fears and desires of the people, offering scapegoats and dogmatic panaceas in an unscrupulous attempt to hold himself forth as the champion of their values, needs and institutions. His behavior is guided more by his potential effect in the beguiling public opinion than by a scrupulous regard for the truth, for basic social values, or for the integrity of the individual in his person property livelihood, or reputation.[7]

While this particular definition makes a moral judgment about demagogues and their motivations, other scholars offer the attribute "appeals to passions" which may include pandering to "passion, bigotry, and ignorance" instead of reason.[8] These perceptions, however, seem to be inconsistent and judgmental. Logue and Dorgan point out other characteristics of the demagogue noted by scholars, such as a folksy, dramatic, emotional,

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[5] Ibid., 3-4.
[6] "The Folklore of Southern Demagoguery," in *Is There a Southern Political Tradition?*, 97.
[7] Logue and Dorgan ed., *The Oratory of the Southern Demagogues.*
[8] Both of these definitions are taken from those discussed by Logue and Dorgan. For primary sources see G.M. Gilbert, "Dictators and Demagogues," *Journal of Social Issues* (1955): 51-53; and Allan Louis Larson, *Southern Demagogues: A Study in Charismatic Leadership* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1964), 76-85.

or carnival-esque delivery style.[9] But these features seem to occur in degrees depending upon the context and time period. For example, the demagogues of the post-Reconstructions era seem outlandish and carnival-like, suited for small towns and entertainment. In contrast the demagogues during the Civil Rights Movement, such as Orval Flaubus and George Wallace, maintain a sense of showmanship in a much more symbolic way, made to court media attention.

Scholars often offer racial attitudes and scapegoating as defining features of the southern demagogue. Indeed, many of those associated with southern demagoguery depict white supremacist, paternalistic attitudes toward race, but as Arsenault points out the use of such tactics could easily change from one campaign to another and even within a politician's career.[10] What this does indicate, however, is a consistency of some form of scapegoating coupled with a lack of patience and tolerance for anything smacking of otherness including caustic remarks about "subversive aliens, Jewish financiers, bomb-throwing Bolsheviks, and Papal conspirators."[11] During the height of civil rights activism a favorite fear-induced prejudice included Communist sympathizers or influences. While many demagogues used race-baiting, Pope-hating, and anti-Communist rhetoric, not all southern demagogues used it the same way or to the same degree. As current events changed from the first of what Arsenault calls the "first wave of southern demagogues" through those in the third wave that occurred from 1948 to the 1960s, southern politicians handled prejudice and race baiting differently. Yet regardless of the "degree" all scholars of demagogues tend to agree that racial prejudice of some kind eventually seems to make its way into the politician's rhetoric.

[9] Logue and Dorgan, *Southern Demagogues*, 6.
[10] Arsenault, "Folklore," 98-99.
[11] Ibid., 100.

Scapegoating develops as a byproduct of what P. M. Carpenter identifies as unidimensionality of message. Carpenter argues that this argumentative strategy diminishes the development of any kind of dialectic and focuses audience attention on a one-sided and overly simplistic argument meant to persuade the audience before a rebuttal or opposing side can be offered.[12] The orator literally separates his argument from any form of critical doubt by refusing to identify the other viewpoint. Scapegoating engages this type of thought process. The scapegoat has no recourse or real chance of rebuttal. Often the scapegoat falls into what historian Sheldon Hackney describes as "Other," a minority group such as African Americans, Jews, or women.[13] Many of those falling into the category of "Other" have problems finding a voice and being heard, and therefore they make excellent targets for taking the blame assigned to the scapegoat.

Scapegoating appears in the current political arena. Even in recent current events attention has been focused on the link between the shift in white southern voters to vote Republican and "coded" racial terminology that began in the "Southern Strategy" borrowed from George Wallace, utilized by Richard Nixon and perfected by Ronald Reagan.[14] Unfortunately, the knowledge that politicians target southern voters with racially coded language hardly diminishes the problems of racism associated with southern demogues, southern rhetoric, or the South itself. If anything, we now realize such racism plays out on a national stump to a mediated audience, far from the backwoods and small southern towns at the start of the twentieth-century.

All of this speculation and discussion does little to narrow down the definition of demagogue, nor does it give criteria for analyzing a politician. It does, however, provide

[12] P. M. Carpenter, "What Qualifies as Demagoguery?" http: //hnn.us/articles/7603.html
[13] Sheldon Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).
[14] Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*.

a few characteristics that may deliver insight into Miller's standing as a southern demagogue. First, southern demagoguery seems to rely on some form of prejudicial incitement and scapegoating. Whether or not this always appears in the form of race-baiting remains to be seen; however, in Miller's case the prejudice seems to be aimed at a lack of values (Christian) and morality. This strategy is emphasized through an over-simplified message. Second, demagogues also tend to address the "common people" or "the masses" about their problems, such as economic hardship or feelings of inferiority. While all politicians do this to some degree, the southern demagogue tends to achieve this through the use of "folksy" or "down home" phrasing and terminology. Finally the third characteristic seems to be a "stunt-like" attention getter meant to gain notice and rally support. Historically this final category has shown itself in the antics of early demagogues who would put on shows to get rural crowds, the Dixiecrats of 1948, led by Strom Thurmond, who marched out of the Democratic National Convention over Truman's civil rights agenda, and George Wallace as he defied the entrance of blacks on the steps of the University of Alabama. These three characteristics, or versions of them, tend to show up most consistently in discussions of southern demagoguery. To say this list is complete or without debatable issues would be a mistake, but this chapter is not a study of southern demagoguery in general. My purpose, instead, remains to discuss Zell Miller's constitutive rhetoric as having qualities associated with southern demagogic rhetoric. Using these criteria allows the warranted discussion of Miller's keynote at the 2004 Republican national convention to take place. To further direct such a discussion necessitates looking at the three ideological effects of constitutive rhetoric as a means of

constructing Miller's use of demagogic tactics and how that, in turn, manifests southern identity.

6.2 Constitutive Rhetoric and the Southern Demagogue

The combination of southern demagoguery appearing within constitutive rhetoric seems highly possible. Constitutive rhetoric calls forth identities as audience, therefore, the use of prejudice to incite fear or appeals to the masses about their common problems through entertaining or "stunt-like" theatrics may easily attract people identifying with the narratives speakers provide. In order to analyze the use of Miller's constitutive rhetoric and its connection to southern demagoguery and southern identity, I argue first that the constitution of a collective subject, in this case southerners as Republicans, appears within Miller's southern ideology brought forth through a demagogic narrative. Second, Miller presents a "transhistorical subject" through demagogic strategy, and third, that those identifying with Miller's narrative are tied to the illusion of freedom brought forth through the use of appeals to the masses and to fears based on prejudicial ideology.

6.2.1 Southerners as Republican Voters

The constitutive rhetoric of Miller's Republican National Convention Speech plays off a long historical tradition of political paradoxes in the South. Southern politics enjoy a long tradition of conservative values and populist views. Throughout history the combination plays out in some interesting ways. For many years after the Civil War and the retaliation against the "party of Lincoln," southerners most notably voted for Democrats as the "Solid South." The civil rights issues after WWII brought to light differences in racial attitudes between southern white democrats and those from the North. The 1948 Dixiecrat revolt began a series of retaliations of southern white

Democrats against their national party. This trend continued throughout the decades of the Civil Rights Movement and even into the 1970s. Even with these moments of revolt, the South remained a stronghold of the Democratic Party, and was considered the country of the "yellow dog Democrat" impenetrable by Republicans. In the 1980s, however, Ronald Reagan found a chink in the armor of the Democratic South and this was soon followed by southern support in 1995 for the Republican takeover of the House of Representatives featuring House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia, Majority Leader Dick Armey of Dallas, Texas and Whip Tom DeLay of Houston, Texas – all considered southerners.[15]

As southern conservatives started to shift from Democratic to Republican support the influence of conservative southerners in the Democratic Party lessened, while influence significantly increased in the Republican Party. In 1995 as Gingrich and his colleagues took over the House other prominent southerners appeared in the Senate. At the same time, although Bill Clinton may have run the White House, other southerners were hard to find among the Democratic Party leadership.

Indeed the climate of southern politics changed. Republicans could now claim a competitive right in the South, and Democrats no longer took the South for granted. In 2002 when Sonny Perdue won the Georgia Gubernatorial election as the first Republican to hold that office since Reconstruction, and Georgia the last Deep South state to do the honors, Republicans across the nation fully realized the South was indeed "up for grabs."

As a result of a now competitive South, Republicans frequently use constitutive rhetoric to call forth southerners who align their identity with the Republican Party. The

[15] For more details on the shift from Democrat to Republican in the South see Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*; and Alexander P. Lamis, ed., *Southern Politics in the 1990s* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999).

2004 Presidential election was no exception. After the "close call" in 2000 when Florida inched in a Republican victory, candidates spent a great amount of focus, time, and money on the southern United States. The Republican national Convention reflected this focus by putting Georgia Democratic Senator Zell Miller on the itinerary as the Wednesday night keynote speaker. The GOP made this choice to appeal to a particular voter. Various news reports picked up on Miller's purpose: "Republicans hoped Miller's speech would prove to undecided voters and maybe some conservative Democrats that Kerry is too liberal for them."[16] "Miller made his name as a progressive Southern governor. . . . By choosing Miller to keynote their convention, Republican leaders hope to convince Democrats uneasy with Kerry that it's OK to cross party lines and vote for Bush."[17] Miller was chosen as a southerner to appeal to conservative Democrats.

Miller's use of constitutive rhetoric begins by creating a narrative in which southerners as well as other conservative Democrats exist as voters for George W. Bush but not necessarily identified with "Republicans." Miller uses the word "Republican" only twice throughout the entire speech and neither example is in reference to the current presidential candidate. The first time is in reference to Wendell Wilkie and his support of FDR: "In 1940 Wendell Wilkie was the Republican nominee . . . he gave Roosevelt the support he needed for a peacetime draft. . . . Where are such statesmen today?"[18] Later he mentions the word while chastising the partisan world of politics by both, "Democrats and Republicans." In fact he almost avoids the term "Republican" when speaking of

[16] Jesse J. Holland, "Miller turns on Democrats at GOP convention 12 years after keynoting at Dem convention," Associated Press State and Local Wire, September 1, 2004, BC cycle.
[17] Andrea Stone, "Democratic Senator follows his heart – but not his party," *USA Today*, September 1, 2004, Final Edition, Pg 6A.
[18] All references to Miller's speech are from the text compiled by Michael Eidenmueller at www.Americanrehtoric.com.

George W. Bush. This tactic demonstrates that while Miller supports George Bush, he realizes conservative Democrats may not feel as easy voting for Republicans in general. Miller is there as an advocate for George Bush, not necessarily for the GOP. He even speaks more freely, albeit critically, of the Democratic Party.

Instead of party affiliation or party vote, Miller speaks to people with "values" and those concerned for their families and the future of America. He begins his speech talking of his own family and the new generation of great grandchildren:

> Along with all the other members of our close-knit family --- they are my and Shirley's most precious possessions. And I know that's how you feel about your family also.
>
> Like you, I think of their future, the promises and perils they will face.
>
> Like you I believe that the next four years will determine what kind of world they will grow up in.
>
> And like you I ask which leader is it today that has the vision, the willpower, and, yes, the backbone to best protect my family?
>
> The clear answer to that question has placed me in this hall with you tonight. For my family is more important than my Party.

In the beginning of the speech, the text shows Miller may be speaking to the Republican National Convention, but he calls to an audience of conservative Democrats. His representation as a southerner is also important, for Bush needed to carry several southern states to win the Presidency. Specifically, Miller addresses people with families and concerns for the future, enlisting a demagogic strategy – that of talking to the common person and addressing their fears. These fears consist of the need for protection in a post 9/11 world and the fear of the unknown factors that accompany terrorism. Miller plays to these specific fears

throughout the speech and these fears help him to call upon the conservative Democrats for which the South is known.

Maurice Charland speaks about the need to create a collective subject within the audience: "It [the collective subject] offers, in [Kenneth] Burke's language, an 'ultimate' identification permitting and overcoming or going beyond divisive individual or class interests and concerns." Miller works to pull together conservative Democrats (southerners) and Republicans to elect George W. Bush into office. He approaches this goal by using the fear of threatened safety and terrorism. His southern demagoguery adds the *exaggeration* of these fears typical with a unidimensional argument in order to rally mass support for Bush. The exaggeration was most evident in a sentence picked up throughout the media about how Kerry opposed various weaponry throughout his career as Senator: "This is --- This is the man who wants to be the Commander in Chief of our U.S. Armed Forces?! U.S. forces armed with what? Spitballs!" The common term "spitballs" not only exaggerates and over simplifies Kerry's position and support of the armed forces, but it also works to reach toward the grass roots population associated with democratic conservatism – in particular, southern Democrats.

Another example of Miller's constitutive rhetoric to call forth the collective subject of conservative Democrats for Bush, including southern voters, occurs through his narrative of past bipartisan politicians who did the "right thing" even when it sacrificed elections or votes. Miller appeals to those southern conservative Democrats who, like him, associate themselves with the Democratic Party, but find the current Democratic candidate unacceptable. Miller makes

going against one's party for the sake of the country "the right thing" to do. His first example is the previously mentioned one of Wendell Wilkie who died realizing he had sacrificed the presidency: "Shortly before Wilkie died he told a friend, that if he could write his own epitaph and had to choose between 'Here lies a President' or 'Here lies one who contributed to saving freedom,' he would prefer the later." Miller pulls other examples from history: "I can remember when Democrats believed it was the duty of America to fight for freedom over tyranny. It was Democratic President Harry Truman who pushed the Red Army out of Iran, who came to the aid of Greece when Communists threatened to overthrow it, who stared down the Soviet blockade of West Berlin by flying in supplies and saving the city." In this instance Miller speaks of Democrats who helped the fight for freedom throughout the world. Miller has "revised" or narrated history in such a way as to bring a collective subject together and bypass individual interests, or in this case, party interests. Charland describes the need for unification in building the collective subject. To tell the story of good moral bipartisan people is, "implicitly to assert the existence of a collective subject, the protagonist of the historical drama who experiences, suffers, and acts. Such a narrative renders the world of events understandable with respect to a transcendental collective interest that negates individual interest."[19] Miller delivers a narrative that includes bipartisan politics, sacrificial attitudes and tough stances for freedom. These things, he asserts, are worth more than individual interests or parties. Of course he himself brings that to the forefront as a symbol of such a sacrifice of party for "what is right."

[19] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 139.

While Miller never mentions a group by name, such as southerners or conservative Democrats, he does address a collective subject made up of these very people. He subtly calls them forth. Yet he achieves the subject by also using southern demagogic strategies such as folksy, grassroots phrasing and an over-simplification, exaggeration, and unidimensionality of issues in order to play on the fears and concerns of the masses.

6.2.2 A Transhistorical Bipartisanship

The second ideological effect of Miller's constitutive rhetoric is the continuation of what Miller has deemed bipartisanship and the moral fight for freedom that defies party lines. Charland explains that constitutive rhetoric provides a transhistorical lineage for the purpose of proving the existence of a collective agent that "transcends the death of individuals across history." The narrative collapses time, "as narrative identification occurs."[20] Miller writes these values into the historical narrative as if they were always there, factually ignored by current Democrats, but nonetheless a part of the political history that defies the death of an individual leader: "I can remember when Democrats believed it was the duty of America to fight for freedom over tyranny. . . Time after time in our history, in the face of great danger, Democrats and Republicans worked together to ensure that freedom would not falter. But not today." Miller offers the "fight for freedom over tyranny" as the one consistent link between those he currently calls forth and good leadership of the past. The "fight for freedom over tyranny" may continue if people of values, regardless of party, work together to achieve this freedom. Historical context is sacrificed within the narrative for values and

[20] Ibid., 140.

bipartisanship. The difference between World War II and our current war in Iraq fails to be a part of the narrative.

Again, while Miller uses constitutive rhetoric he does so while also acting as a southern demagogue. The transhistorical narrative provides ways for Miller to separate good, moral, Americans away from the ideas of the Democratic Presidential candidate John Kerry. The good people of the past differ from those of today who represent the Democratic Party. He accomplishes this by oversimplifying the war in Iraq and America's wartime concerns of the past:

> "Motivated more by partisan politics than by national security, today's Democratic leaders see America as an occupier, not a liberator.
>
> And nothing makes this Marine madder than someone calling American troops occupiers rather than liberators.
>
> Tell that -- Tell that to the one-half of Europe that was freed because Franklin Roosevelt led an army of liberators, not occupiers.
>
> Tell that to the lower half of the Korean Peninsula that is free because Dwight Eisenhower commanded an army of liberators, not occupiers.
>
> Tell that to the half a billion men, women and children who are free today from Poland to Siberia, because Ronald Reagan rebuilt a military of liberators, not occupiers.
>
> Never in the history of the world has any soldier sacrificed more for the freedom and liberty of total strangers than the American soldier. And, our soldiers don't just give freedom abroad, they preserve it for us here at home.

Miller shows the transhistorical narrative of those willing to sacrifice in order to "free" other countries. He uses Roosevelt, Eisenhower, and Ronald Reagan together as representations of bipartisan support for "liberating other countries."

While developing the transhistorical narrative of constitutive rhetoric, Miller also utilizes southern demagoguery. The line "And nothing makes this marine madder than someone calling American troops occupiers rather than liberators" is an example of oversimplifying and exaggerating, delivering an almost "good ol boy" reaction to the war that is unidimensional and playing on the patriotism of the grassroots. Meanwhile, by this point in the speech, Miller places undeniable blame on the liberal Democrats for calling American troops "occupiers," for such a term negates Miller's narrative that the war in Iraq, as well as the current election, is a war of "freedom over tyranny." In this example, Miller's use of scapegoating is not the typical racial or religious blame used by southern demagogues of the past. Miller attacks the liberal Democrats for their ideology. P. M. Carpenter describes such scapegoating as typical of the demagogue: "Scapegoating: the hostile targeting of select groups for condemnation and blame. Important to note is that these groups may be identified by ethnicity, race, or religion, of course, but just as easily by political ideology."[21] Miller blames the Democrats not through racial or religious prejudice, but instead for leaving their ideological past.[22]

The transhistorical narrative delivered by Miller results from the constitutive rhetoric he uses to call forth and identify conservative Democrats and southerners. The narrative tells a story of bipartisan leadership and sacrifice for the fight over tyranny for freedom. Yet to gain this revision of history, Miller

[21] Carpenter, "What Qualifies as Demagoguery?"
[22] Miller goes into great detail about his position on this subject in *A National Party No More: The Conscience of a Conservative Democrat* (Atlanta: Stroud and Hall P, 2003). Here his basic thesis details how the Democratic Party has left those with conservative but Democratic beliefs behind for liberal policies separate from New Deal ideas.

utilizes the tactics of southern demagogues, such as unidimensional argument, exaggeration and over simplification, and scapegoating.[23] He also connotes phrasing and terminology meant to appeal to the grassroots. Miller employs all these characteristics in an effort to call forth southerners and other conservative democrats to vote for George W. Bush.

6.2.3 The Collective Vote

As Miller speaks he eventually gets to the point of his narrative, as well as his rhetoric, to call forth conservative Democrats to vote for George W. Bush. Charland points out that within the narratives of constitutive rhetoric the freedom of choice is an illusion. Those identifying with the narrative must act as the narrative suggests or lose their identity: "narratives are but texts that offer the illusion of agency . . . .To be constituted as a subject in a narrative is to be constituted with a history, motives, and a telos." The audience which Miller calls forth must vote for Bush to act as the "moral, sacrificing, bipartisan Americans" described by Miller. Such a request gives the illusion of a free act, without the reality of freedom, for, as Charland argues, the narrative only gives the illusion of freedom: "Because the narrative is a structure of understanding that produces totalizing interpretations, the subject is constrained to *follow through*, to act so as to maintain the narrative's consistency."[24]

Miller pushes the illusion of choice further by oversimplifying the choice between Bush and Kerry.

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[23] P.M. Carpenter uses the term unidimensional argument to represent one-sided arguments that give no reference or credit to another viewpoint.
[24] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 141 (italics in the original).

> For more than twenty years, on every one of the great issues of freedom and security, John Kerry has been more wrong, more weak, and more wobbly than any other national figure. As a war protestor, Kerry blamed our military. As a Senator, he voted to weaken our military. And nothing shows that more sadly and more clearly than his vote this year to deny protective armor for our troops in harms way, far-away.
>
> George W. Bush understands that we need new strategies to meet new threats.
>
> John Kerry wants to re-fight yesterday's war.
>
> President Bush believes we have to fight today's war and be ready for tomorrow's challenges.
>
> President Bush is committed to providing the kind of forces it takes to root out terrorists -- no matter what spider hole they may hide in or what rock they crawl under.
>
> George W. Bush wants to grab terrorists by the throat and not let them go to get a better grip.
>
> From John Kerry, they get a "yes-no-maybe" bowl of mush that can only encourage our enemies and confuse our friends.

This series of comparisons leads the narrative toward a preconceived choice that must be acted on come Election Day. The choice of Bush over Kerry is based on a one-sided argument typical of southern demagoguery. The description of Kerry as being, “more wrong, more weak, and more wobbly than any other national figure” is a grand statement meant to exaggerate. Miller’s use of phrasing such as “bowl of mush” again plays to grass roots as a type of “no nonsense” comment. While this section of the speech continues effects of constitutive rhetoric such as constituting a collective subject, Miller’s direction here slightly changes to emphasize the choice of conservative Democrats and moral Americans in the upcoming election.

Miller moves from a direct comparison of Kerry and Bush to presenting Bush as a moral and “God-fearing” choice. After discussing Bush’s “respect for the First Lady”

and "his belief that God is not indifferent to America," Miller gives a few more folksy, down-to-earth phrases combined with a one-sided view of Bush: "I can identify with someone who has lived that line in 'Amazing Grace,' 'Was blind, but now I see,' and I like the fact that he's the same man on Saturday night that he is on Sunday morning." Miller associates God, Christianity, and morality with Bush. He furthers this line of argument: "He is not a slick talker but he is a straight shooter, and where I come from deeds mean a lot more than words." These lines have appeals to the "masses," as scholars of the demagogue describe such phrases; however, these lines also serve a purpose in constitutive rhetoric of providing the illusion of choice for the collective subject – a choice between Bush and Kerry. Miller's narrative provides the collective subject no other choice than to vote for Bush if indeed the subject is to continue to exist within the narrative. Miller writes the narrative for this purpose, to get votes for Bush necessitates the calling forth of conservative Democrats who identify with patriotism and morality. As with the other effects of constitutive rhetoric, Miller creates an illusion of choice laced with southern demagogic tactics of grassroots phrasing, one-sided arguments, and the scapegoating of Kerry. After all Miller could not say it more plainly: "The answer lies with each of us. And like many generations before us, we've got some hard choosing to do." The purpose of the collective subject Miller calls forth joins a long history of subjects with similar choices. This collective subject must take actions to continue this historical narrative and remain a part of it.

Miller's speech at the Republican National Convention gained much attention. His constitutive rhetoric seems, at least partially, to contribute to Bush's re-election in November, 2004. The speech deploys all the effects of constitutive rhetoric, yet also

contains those of southern demagoguery. This demagoguery took place not in front of the typical southern audiences of the past as it did with George Wallace or Lester Maddox. Instead Miller's demagoguery was postsouthern because it was given and accepted by a nationwide audience, many of whom seem to identify with Miller's message. Former southern demagogues rarely spoke to a national audience, instead targeting their message toward audiences they called forth from the South, yet Miller seems to show potential "southern cultural" beliefs and grassroots understandings work outside the South as well as within it. This is evidence of postsouthern ambiguities at work. The lines of the "South" and rhetorical tactics typically reserved by southerners and for southerners are now being used effectively to call forth audiences on a national stage.

6.3 Parody of a Southern Demagogue

While constitutive rhetoric may have been effective for some in this national audience, others were unconvinced of Miller's sincerity and motives. Several people remain who were not called forth, not accepting of the ideas Miller presented. For these people Miller became the parody of the southern demagogue. Using Linda Hutcheon's view that parody is "transcontextualization" or "repetition with a difference," we see some obvious parodic comparisons to make of Miller's speech. This parody may first be found in what has yet to be discussed, Miller's delivery of the speech.

While the constitutive rhetoric of Miller's speech may be found in the text, his delivery communicated several meanings picked up by those left out of Miller's hailed audience. Miller initially walks out on stage to cheers and applause and smiles to the gathered group and television cameras. However, within a few lines of the speech he lets

loose what could easily be perceived as an angry diatribe against the Democrats, Kerry, and Bush opponents. The press immediately picked this up with reports of "hell-fire and brimstone" delivery, a "scorching of Kerry" and a possible "back fire" in the minds of the voters for such an angry speech. The San Francisco Chronicle deemed the speech "one of the harsher convention speeches in recent memory."[25] Several reports of his delivery include descriptions such as: "Miller's angry speech, delivered with a firm scowl," and "With a scowl on his face and a tremble in his voice."[26] Others were more poignant: "CNN's Bill Schneider claimed he'd 'never heard such an angry speech.' And Time magazine's Joe Klein, also on CNN: 'I don't think I've ever seen anything as angry or as ugly.'"[27] This perception was then compounded by the proposed "duel" to which Miller challenged NBC reporter Chris Matthews when Matthews questioned some of the factual information in Miller's speech.

Of course Democrats rallied against the credibility of Miller by claiming he is a racist because he worked for Lester Maddox at the start of this career, and that he was a Republican in Democrat clothing. Republicans at the convention reacted with enthusiasm. But one consistent comparison came through the various ways the press labeled Miller as both southern and in some cases a demagogue. Comparing Miller with the Dixiecrats, Lester Maddox, and Pat Buchanan clear connections were made to Miller and southern demagoguery. The Washington Post described Miller as a "fire-and-brimstone-preaching Dixiecrat."[28] Immediately after the speech political commentators

[25] *San Francisco Chronicle*, internet version, September 2, 2004, accession number 9YQ3363507.
[26] Andrea Stone, "Democratic Senator drops bomb on own Party," *USA Today*, September 2, 2004, Final Edition, p. 5A.
[27] "Pundits' Plea: Quell Zell," *The New York Post*, September 3, 2004, Late City Final, p. 34.
[28] Lisa de Moraes "Fox News Channel, Giving 'Em More Zell," *The Washington Post*, December 15, 2004, Final Edition p.C07.

made reference to Miller's connections to Lester Maddox: "Miller, 'was passionate when he was a racist 30 years ago,' said [Al] Hunt. Added [Chris] Matthews "[he] earned his political spurs in the still-segregationist South.'"[29] Democrats discussed the speech as similar in tone to Pat Buchanan's "culture war" speech at the GOP convention in 1992 that caused problems for Bush Sr. What makes Miller a southern demagogic parody are these very comparisons. The fact that when he spoke those on the outside of his constituted audience saw direct comparisons to past examples of southern demagoguery made him both "transcontextual" and a form of "repetition with a difference." Although Miller delivered a speech that scapegoated Democrats instead of blacks, and he discussed Iraq not segregation, his symbolic "leaving" of the Democratic Party – without changing parties – gave reminders of the Dixiecrats. And although he scapegoated the liberal Democrats, and not African Americans, his past with well known segregationist Lester Maddox was brought to the surface. The press as well as those outside Miller's collective subject see him as "of the same cloth" as other former southern demagogues, yet the context of this speech is different than other southern demagogic contexts. Miller speaks as a southerner with a "southern" Democratic ideology and a delivery style suited to characteristics identified in past southern demagogues. Yet these very characteristics set him up as a parody in the minds of those outside Miller's collective subject. Press and editorial comments align him with past southern demagogues not only attempting to hurt his credibility, but to also understand Miller as a postsouthern parody, repeating rhetoric and delivery of the past in a present context.

Zell Miller's speech at the 2004 Republican National Convention is historically significant; never before has a keynote address been delivered by someone from the

[29] "Pundits' Plea: Quell Zell," *The New York Post*, September 3, 2004, p. 34.

opposing party at a convention. Miller's fiery preaching and angry attack resonated with some in his audience showing evidence of the effects of constitutive rhetoric as outlined by Maurice Charland. Miller's narrative gives evidence of a collective subject called forth through a transhistorical narrative and gives an illusion of a presidential choice. Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody provides the lens through which to understand how Miller's delivery and subsequent dialogue with television reporters supports the view of those not in Miller's collective audience to see him as a parody of the southern demagogue. Miller's identity as a southern speaker giving a speech about conservative Democratic values to a national audience makes him not only a postsouthern speaker but a parody of the southern demagogue to his opposition.

This analysis not only identifies what most accurately is described as postsouthern demagoguery in current day politics, but it also shows the relevance of continuing to observe discourse from a southern perspective. The assumption that southern rhetoric remains in the past undeniably folds when looking at the postsouthern demagoguery and constitutive rhetoric of Miller's Republican convention speech. The speech provides an example of how the traditional southern politician (white, male, protestant) deals with a more complicated and less traditional southern audience in postsouthern times. Miller addressed those with "southern values" even though some of those people may live in Iowa or California. The demographics of the southern audience may have changed providing another element in the postsouthern development.

Miller's speech is just one example of how the scholarship of the past on southern demagoguery may be combined with contemporary theory to provide a different perspective than outlined through the Vanderbilt Agrarian ideological tradition. While

views on southern, or postsouthern, rhetoric may change for our contemporary times its evolution and development as an entity still provides implications for our nation at large.

Chapter 7

The "Other" Southerner: The Rhetoric of Charlotte Hawkins Brown

> The cultural history of the American South between 1890 and 1940 provides the chiaroscuro necessary to make the invisible visible, to give whiteness a color. The ways in which the South has served national imaginings have, after all, doubled the ways in which blackness has served American whiteness.
>
> Grace Elizabeth Hale
> *Making Whiteness*, 1998[1]

At the crux of this dissertation sits the issue of "southern" and what the word means. As I explained in other parts of this project, the term southern is ambiguous and slippery in the best of circumstances. To then add the issue of African American southerners and their identity as southerners remains complex to say the very least. The construct of southern identity throughout literary and rhetorical history has, on the whole, ignored African Americans as having southern identity. And yet, history tells us that the South and its culture remain as greatly affected and influenced by African Americans as that of Euro-Americans.

The problem of redefining the South – or just its rhetoric – presents itself in the assumption that one identity or definition can fit both white and black southerners. Viewing the South in terms of white constructs, one sees the subtle and obvious differences prevailing throughout. I feel rather safe in hypothesizing that such differences exist in those considered southern African Americans as well. The other issue to this quandary is whether southern African Americans want to be a part of an identity that for so very long has negated their existence and historical contributions in anthologies and scholarship. As to the latter question, I am unable to answer. To the

[1] Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 3.

former question, though, I offer the following case study as a beginning to this far reaching discussion.

For the most part, definitions of southern rhetoric, as passed down through the southern Agrarians, contain descriptions and images upholding a primarily white viewpoint. As those definitions surface within the work of southern rhetorical scholars they seem to give "voice" primarily to white southerners, thus leaving the impression that "southern" belongs to a white, patriarchal South.

In contrast to this image, southern African American scholars recently work to "reclaim" the South for their own identification as southerners. Houston Baker and his work *Turning South Again* discusses the connection between the South and African Americans who were born there. In speaking of his own southerness which he "long sought to erase from [his] speech, [his] bearing, and [his] memory," Baker found his identity as a black man was also tied to his identity as a southerner: "In face-to-face encounters anywhere below the Mason-Dixon, I quickly discover I have not left the South, nor has the South left me."[2] Baker's identity as a southern black male calls forth many issues as to the definition of "southern" and the place of African Americans, as well as other people of color, within that definition.

In a similar vein, Toni Morrison also asks questions about defining whiteness through the absence of blackness both in criticism and literature:

> The situation is aggravated by the tremor that breaks into discourse on race. It is further complicated by the fact that the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture. To notice is to recognize an already discredited difference. To enforce its invisibility through silence is to allow

[2] Baker, *Turning South Again*, 15.

> the black body a shadowless participation in the dominant cultural body.[3]

The very absence of southern African Americans from the discussion of southern rhetoric is disturbing for reasons too numerous to deal with here. And yet the very idea that "southerness," in its traditional definition, encompasses an absence of black southerness gets to the very heart of southern identity before and during a "postsouth." The very idea that southerness is synonymous with whiteness misrepresents both the South and African American southerners who live there. The postsouth allows for this diversity in ways that traditional definitions of southern do not. The layering of history that demonstrates a postsouth allows for more than one meaning attached to a symbol or reference. Within a postsouth analysis we may ask how black southerners identify with the South.

In order to approach these issues of southerness, whiteness, and African American southerners I examine Charlotte Hawkins Brown's "*Mammy:" An Appeal to the Heart of the South* which was written in 1919.[4] A look at the discourse of Charlotte Hawkins Brown can add to the scholarly discussion of "southern" rhetoric, the definitions of "southern" rhetoric, and the lack of southern African Americans represented in those definitions. Her rhetoric brings forward issues of voice, race, gender, and representation as demonstrated in the early twentieth-century South. The complexity of these issues surface both in Brown's work and in the narrative of her own life. In this chapter I argue that the very issues with which Brown struggles in order to gain empathy and identification with a marginalized character are some of the same problems facing southern rhetorical scholars approaching southern identity as inclusive of both white and

[3] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 9-10.
[4] Charlotte Hawkins Brown, *"Mammy:"An Appeal to the Heart of the South* (New York: G.K. Hall and Co., 1995).

black culture. To claim "southern" for African Americans not only changes the definition of southern identity in ways not yet seen, but creates tension for African American voices in southern scholarship. To develop and analyze some of the issues surrounding this rather complicated problem I will use Brown's book *Mammy* as an example of an alternative view of the South not seen in traditional southern rhetorical studies. To accomplish this I will first summarize the book's plot, examine the effects of Brown's constitutive rhetoric, discuss the book as a part of the postsouthern development, and finally explain the role of parody in Brown's text. As a constitutive rhetoric Brown's discourse illustrates the "other" voice of southern rhetoric. By this I mean that, traditionally conceived, southern rhetoric represents speeches of white southerners. Yet Brown's example indicates the presence of an "other" marginal voice to challenge the typical representation of "southern." Her novella ironically exemplifies the way that whiteness constructs blackness as its invisible or shadowed other.

A postsouthern reading of the novella aids in the analysis of this 1919 text. While my previous case studies focus on how contemporary public address demonstrates the postsouthern context, the case of *Mammy* remains distinct due to its different historical context. In this particular instance, a historical text written prior to the time that most scholars demarcate a postsouthern consciousness will be analyzed through a postsouthern lens. In other words, when Lewis Simpson discussed southern literature as being postsouthern and parody, he makes specific reference to William Faulkner's later works. These works were written in the 1940s and later. Brown's *Mammy*, written in 1919, does not have the same postsouthern ambiguity when speaking of the South or issues that are southern as later literature did when the term southern had come to mean so many

different things. When critics and readers read Brown's work today, they do so with some of the ambiguities in mind, not because the work itself is postsouthern, but because contemporary readers today are influenced by the postsouthern. As Linda Hutcheon reminds us parody, to be understood, comes from the reader's understanding of the "transcontextual." Reading a novella written for a 1919 audience in the twenty-first century provides much ground for transcontextual meaning and historical layering to appear.

7.1 Brown and *Mammy*

Brown, a southern-born African American suffragist and education activist, worked to change interracial attitudes during the early 1900s. Her school, The Palmer Memorial Institute, named after a former Wellesley President, attended to the educational needs of black female students from secondary education to their first two years of college. Primarily upper and middle class northern whites supported her school. When fire struck a building of the Palmer Institute, Brown was forced to ask Greensboro, North Carolina whites for help. A chance encounter with Mrs. Lula McIver led to a friendship giving Brown entry and access to upper and middle class southern whites.[5]

Charlotte Hawkins Brown wrote the book, "*Mammy," an Appeal to the Heart of the South* as an admonishment to whites to take care of their black domestic help in the Post-Reconstruction South. Written in the form of prose, the book tells the story of a black mammy, her white overseer and his family. Brown's story is of a former slave, "Mammy," who made a promise to the plantation master before he went to fight in the Civil War to take care of the family until she died. After the war's conclusion Mammy stays and sees the plantation land sold into small tracts, the financial problems of the

[5] Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 188-189.

"Bretherton" family (a reference to "brethren"), and the eventual inheritance of the plantation by the Bretherton children. Mammy and her husband live in a run down cabin; the roof leaks, and there is little wood for heat. When Mammy becomes too old for work, she and her husband are left in the old cabin while the Brethertons go about their daily life giving little consideration to the cabin or to Mammy. The only two people who voice concern over Mammy's living conditions are the Bretherton daughter Edith and her stepmother, Mrs. Bretherton, who tells Edith of Mammy's sacrifice of $1000.00, insurance money given to the Brethertons in a time of need. Although the Mistress realizes the Brethertons owe much to Mammy, she cannot convince her husband to improve life for the black couple. Mammy eventually dies in a snowdrift while trying to get to the "big house" to make biscuits.

Charlotte Hawkins Brown and her book are important to the study of southern rhetoric and public address as an example of "other" southerners left out of both the traditional definition of "southern" and the southern rhetorical canon. As a black woman born in the South, educated in Massachusetts and returning to the South, Brown represents the journey many African Americans such as Houston Baker make.

7.2 The Use of Constitutive Rhetoric by "Other"

7.2.1 The Collective Subject and the Protagonist

The use of constitutive rhetoric for this particular text develops as both a literary narrative and a rhetorical plea for help. Brown's text is significant due to its combined work of a marginalized voice in the South and its historical 1919 context. The constitutive rhetoric of *Mammy* addresses primarily the audience at hand during the publication of the book. To analyze Brown's constitutive rhetoric I will look at the effects

as discussed by Maurice Charland in his article "Constitutive Rhetoric: the Case of the *Peuple Quebecois*." Charland outlines the three effects as 1) constituting a collective subject, 2) positing a transhistorical subject, and 3) creating the illusion of freedom. All these effects take place within the narrative as communicated by Brown in her book *Mammy*. Brown creates a collective and transhistorical white subject whose illusion of freedom is contingent on maintaining racial hierarchies of the Old South while parodying the Old South manifestations of racism.

The first effect, constituting a collective subject, starts in the very title of the book. Brown appeals to the "heart of the South." While the title may not clearly identify the audience, the narrative and its context give more specific evidence of exactly who Brown intended to call forth. The novel specifically deals with how slave owners treated slaves who voluntarily stayed on farms and plantations after the Civil War. Brown intended the story of Mammy to parallel the 1919 situation of black domestic workers who cared for white upper and middle class families. Her belief in Booker T. Washington's accomodationist approach highly influenced her idea that educated African American students could aid white southerners through domestic service, thus creating a better world for both races. Brown intended not only to appeal to white women about the treatment of African American help, but to also convince them of the validity of black educated help: "*Mammy* was more than just a delving into the techniques of imaginative fiction. It was Brown's veiled *appeal* to Southern whites to exhibit a more obliging appreciative stance regarding the intimate and indispensable role that blacks, most clearly exemplified in the female house slave, had served in their lives."[6] Brown's use of

[6] Carolyn C. Denard, "Introduction," in *Mammy: an Appeal to the Heart of the South* (New York: G.K. Hall and Co., 1995), xx.

narrative to call forth southern white women takes place by creating a setting appealing to an Old South sense of order and paternalism, while also making local whites comfortable with the education of her black female students.

Brown constitutes her audience of primarily white southern females through the use of characterization. Covering multiple age groups and generations, she describes the granny, wife of the Colonel to whom Mammy pledges service until death, the mother, wife of the current Bretherton patriarch, and Edith, currently in boarding school somewhere in the North. Each character calls to the audience of white female southerners of various ages; Granny represents the Old South past, the mother designates the present generation, and Edith symbolizes the future. Each generation neglects Mammy and takes her service for granted in different ways. The characters allow Brown to assert the existence of white southern women as the "heart" of the South.

Although Brown writes this story to a white audience, her protagonist is the black Mammy. This is a slight but critical alteration to Charland's discussion of the collective subject as audience. Charland explains the collective subject exists as "the protagonist of the historical drama, who experiences, suffers, and acts."[7] Yet in this case the collective subject is one of many white subjects indifferent to the actual protagonist who "experiences, suffers, and acts" as Charland describes. Brown's focus, however, remains on the white audience, particularly females. A story about a black protagonist addressed to a white audience in the 1919 South presents a paradoxical subject for the identification necessary to constitutive rhetoric. White audiences must identify with minor characters who, throughout the novella, weep with Mammy, discuss Mammy's welfare, and require the most from Mammy. Brown boldly suggests that had the mother and Edith exerted

[7] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 139.

more influence on Edith's father, then Mammy's living conditions would not have deteriorated to a leaky roof and cold drafts. Brown illustrates this through the talk Edith has with her mother over the condition of Mammy's cabin:

> "I know it's spotless, but it looks as if it would tumble down any minute, and when I was there last fall, Mammy had a wash tub on top of the bed to catch the large drops of rain."
> "Why didn't you tell your Papa?" Said Mother.
> "Mother," Edith answered, "I did, but papa said the old folks hadn't long to live, and as soon as they were dead the cabin would be torn down and the property would be for sale, and he said it was useless to spend any money on it."
> "Well don't let the situation worry you, little girl," remarked her mother."[8]

Here Brown shows the concern for the former slave through the voice of Edith, but the lack of attention paid to the concern by the girl's mother condemns the white audience at the same time. Brown's rhetoric illustrates the complexity of producing a white collective subject when the emotional bond and even identification leans toward a member excluded from this audience. Although the novella's audience demographic is white southern female, it calls to white southern females who can identify and empathize with black domestic servants. In very small glimpses, Edith personifies this collective subject. She represents future developments of southern black/white relations. Her youth and empathetic moments represent the future Brown wishes to endorse for black domestic workers and their white employers. Edith sits on the verge of the interracial cooperation Brown endorses. Ironically, the white collective subject exists *because* of the less dominant black literary subject and her black author. The collective subject answers through its sympathy for Mammy's condition. Their concern for Brown's character brings them into the narrative as those who may potentially solve racial

[8] Brown, *Mammy*, 20-21.

problems. Brown's audience empathizes with Mammy due to the actions and voice of the white family toward Mammy. While Mammy does speak in the novella, her visibility to her audience is most apparent when the white family speaks of her. Edith describes the horrible conditions in which Mammy lives and Edith's mother describes how Mammy gives the family money in a time of crisis. Through the Bretherton's words and actions we see the indifference and neglect of which Mammy does not speak, as well as Mammy's loyalty to the Bretherton household.

This empathetic relationship of the audience, or collective subject, to the literary subject of *Mammy* skews Charland's discussion on how the collective subject develops. In the 1919 South Brown had little choice but to write a book with white sanction. She even went so far as to dedicate the book to Mrs. Lula McIver, who wrote a note of endorsement for the novella that ended, "I verily believe that to the most intelligent southern white women we must look for leadership in keeping our 'ship of state' off the rocks of racial antagonism."[9] McIver was the wife of Charles McIver, a prominent Greensboro education activist. Like Mrs. McIver, who gives the approval for Brown to speak, the female Brethertons make it possible for Mammy to be heard. She exists because they exist. Charland's collective subject allows for an "outside" or "marginal" voice to be heard.

By speaking of marginal, I refer to what cultural theorist bell hooks identifies as being, "a part of the whole but outside the main body."[10] In later works hooks explains some of the advantages of the marginal viewpoint as "a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of a radical

[9] Lula Martin McIver to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 6 April 1920, reel 2, #41, Brown Collection, SL.
[10] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End P, 1984).

perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds."[11] Brown takes advantage of this viewpoint by constituting a subject dependent upon the viewpoint of "other." In other words, in order for the collective subject of the white southern female to identify with Brown's narrative they need the empathy provided through the existence of the black marginal character. Brown signifies Mammy's marginal view in several symbolic ways. Mammy lives in the cabin outside the "big house" yet makes trips back and forth three times a day. She is part of and yet apart from the Bretherton household. The white women in the story speak of Mammy as "like a sister" and a "Mammy," a derivative of the word Mommy. While she is close to the family she is not family. Mammy seems to shadow the white women in the story. She is the "darker" part of their existence and moral judgment. Poet and literary critic Toni Morrison explains this relationship: "Black slavery enriched the country's creative possibilities. For in that construction of blackness and enslavement could be found not only the not-free but also, with the dramatic polarity created by skin color, the projection of the not-me."[12] Mammy exists so that Browns' collective subject can feel their paternalistic shame. Her part of the South and of southerness, as Brown narrates it, is as a moral outlet for southern whites to measure their actions by. They need Mammy to paternalize.

Yet this very paternalization to which Brown appeals keeps southern African American women in an unequal position vis-a-vis white women. The endorsement of interracial cooperation among women actually encourages the power white southern women exert over black women. For Brown to constitute a collective subject of white

[11] bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 149-150.
[12] Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, 38

southern women, in this instance, necessitates acknowledging and even supporting hierarchies within the southern racial relationship. Such continuation of the status quo creates a problem for those in the marginal position, for while they may gain some attention and help from those of higher status, they do so at the expense of their own status.

7.2.2 The Transhistorical Subject and Its Dependence on "Other"

Charland's second ideological effect demonstrates the positing of a transhistorical subject. This requires a "concrete link" of ancestry from the past to the present. The collective subject must be written into the historical narrative. Success at this stage depends upon the "acceptance of that which it attempts to prove the existence of," in this case conscientious southern whites, "that transcends the limitations of individuality at any historical moment and transcends the death of individuals across history."[13] Brown demonstrates this positing through the generations of Bretherton family members. The grandmother and Colonel represent the Old South, while the mother and Edith's father signify the current 1919 South, and Edith represents the future South. These stages of generations are important, because the connection to the Old South was something still revered in the 1919 white South. Brown symbolically ties the collective subject to the Old South both through Mammy's loyalty that lasts before, during, and after the Civil War and the generations of Bretherton women and the time periods they designate. Brown's point, that white southern women need to care for and support their black domestic help, transcends time and is linked, in this case, to the paternalistic attitudes of white slave owners to their slaves.

[13] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 140.

In this analysis of the transhistorical subject, we again see a codependence upon the white collective subject to the black protagonist. Just as the white collective subject depends on Mammy's character for their own existence in Brown's narrative, the collective subject as transhistorical subject needs Mammy to round out the historical narrative. As the "slave" character, Mammy's connection to the Old South allows for the white "owner" to be an owner. The white owner status exploits power over slaves. Without such slaves, the owner's status and power diminishes. Brown actually uses the paternal and racist attitudes of white southerners to make her point – that all southerners both white and black benefited from and even needed interracial cooperation: "Brown created a fictional mirror of civility in race relations and held it up to whites as a reflection of their better selves."[14] Charlotte Hawkins Brown understood the need to connect her collective subject and her goal to the history of a "white" South. Since many of the female southerners she addressed saw themselves as "Christian paternalists," Brown used this as the principle on which to rest her historical narrative.

Again, however, Brown demonstrates the historical relevance of paternalism at the cost of black advancement. Nowhere in this narrative does the idea emerge to help Mammy become independent from Bretherton aid. The transhistorical subject is dependent upon a model of Old South paternalism.

7.2.3 Offering a "Southern" Choice

As Brown calls forth her white southern audience and develops a history based on "proper" treatment of black domestic help, she also creates the illusion of a choice for her audience. *Mammy* ends with the death of the grandmother and the death of Mammy. While the Brethertons are well aware of "Grandma's" death, Mammy is killed in a snow

[14] Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 185.

avalanche, a symbolic death by whiteness, while walking to the big house to make biscuits and she is not found until the snow starts to melt later that day. Through the deaths of both characters, Brown presents the power of the narrative over the choice of the audience. Mammy was neglected and taken for granted; as a result, her poor quality of life and sad death lay on the Bretherton hands, most specifically the mother and Edith. The only choice left for the collective subject is to better the lives of blacks working in their house: "Brown's *Mammy* is not a tale of love rewarded; it is an indictment of white neglect of African Americans."[15] Brown's marginalized character allows Mammy to take the moral high ground. By the end of the story Mammy is the only blameless character. Her loyalty, faithfulness, and consistency separate her form the other characters that gain her services through oppression. Critic bell hooks explains why black women can maintain this moral stance: "Black women with no institutionalized "other" that we may discriminate against, exploit, or oppress, often have a lived experience that directly challenges the prevailing classist, sexist, racist social structure and its concomitant ideology."[16] Mammy's position in society grants her a moral posture used by Brown to shame those of higher rank and position. Now aware of such neglect the audience must change any behavior resembling that of the indifference represented in the book.

Consistent with Brown's earlier use of accomodationist ideology, she uses the paternalistic sense of southern white women as well as their sense of historical awareness against them in order to achieve her goal. When Mammy dies so does the grandmother, the link to the Old South, a subtle reminder that the choice facing the audience links itself

[15] Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 189.
[16] hooks, *Feminist Theory*, 15.

to the history of the South so romanticized and valued at this time. Brown pushes her point further in the last words of the novella: "Each year the Brethertons make a pilgrimage to Green Hill Cemetery to plant flowers, but only the kind honeysuckle creeps over the grave of the body in ebony whose soul was whiter than snow."[17] Charlotte Hawkins Brown continues not only to control the audience's choice through the narrative, through shame, but also to further the connection of Mammy to the Bretherton's whiteness. Mammy's body may have been "ebony," but her soul was "whiter than snow." The insinuation that there may be "white" bodies with "black" souls alludes not just to the moral significance of Brown's stand, but to the reflection of whiteness attached to the identity of Brown's southern audience.

7.2.4 Constitutive Rhetoric and the Problems of "Other"

As already discussed, Brown utilizes constitutive rhetoric as a way to help southern white females identify with the need for interracial cooperation. Yet the marginalized voice of both Brown and Mammy create a problem in the fulfillment of Brown's purpose. Brown built her life around the promotion of interracial cooperation. Her school and its funding depended upon it. To convince others of the need for such cooperation required creating a connection between white and black women, or showing the dependence of one upon the other in the early twentieth-century South. The identity of middle class whites who considered themselves southerners depended upon the existence of southern African Americans to whom they could contrast themselves. While Brown realizes this, she also points out the need for both to exist, and for both to work together in the promotion of an interracial South through which southern identity could survive – in whatever form the audience constructs that identity.

[17] Brown, *Mammy*, 26.

By constituting an audience through literature, Charlotte Hawkins Brown makes an ideological argument for interracial cooperation and for support for her school. The local southern whites responded in kind. According to critic Carolyn C. Denard, while Brown received some criticism for the book from northern white supporters of her school who considered it "going too far," by bringing up the whole "North / South war," the contributions to the Palmer Institute by southern whites increased. Unfortunately, Denard reports no reviews or comments about the book in the black press or black literary magazines. Publication seems to have been limited to the New England area and North Carolina where Brown supporters tended to live.[18] Brown, however, did much more than raise money for her school; she rhetorically examines the relationship between whites and blacks while also linking both to a southern history narrative on which they both depend – literally and symbolically.

Brown's ideology comes with a cost. In order to maintain support for her school, she publicly credits the very paternalistic nature of white southern women at a time when issues of Jim Crow and suffrage were placing black women in extreme marginal positions. Although Brown seems to be using the white paternal system against itself, she still validates that system by appearing to accept the oppressed position in which the system places her. For southern states in 1919 the role black women play in the voting process becomes a major area of contention. To give women the right to vote meant giving black women a place in politics; while a few white suffragists looked to their black counterparts for help in the suffrage movement, most downplayed the black vote in

[18] Denard, "Introduction," in *Mammy*, xxiv-xxv.

order to gain support of other white women and to counter anti-suffrage attacks.[19] Black women, being the most oppressed minority, found themselves relying on white women to gain power and status, but the women on whom they relied refused to completely give up their power. Brown's career of advocating interracial cooperation illustrates this. She led what some scholars have deemed a "double life:" "Living her life as a diplomat to the white community, Brown could never be just Lottie Hawkins. African American women who chose to take up interracial work walked a tightrope that required them to be forever careful, tense, and calculating. One slip would end their careers; they worked without nets."[20] The cost of interracial cooperation in the 1919 South meant no matter how much one advanced the cause a black woman still worked within a system in which she remained oppressed. The book evolves from this paradox. Brown's goal of interracial cooperation is the catalyst for the marginal voice within "Mammy," a goal that also proves to continue an oppressive race, class, and gender hierarchy.

7.3 The "Other" as Postsouthern Parody

As the past examples of contemporary public address in chapters five and six illustrate the constitutive rhetoric and parodic tendencies of postsouth rhetoric, the question of how to evaluate southern rhetoric left outside the traditional southern rhetorical canon as postsouthern remains unanswered. The issue is an important one, for it gets at the core of how southern identity, through the traditional Agrarian definition, remains greatly affected by issues of race, class, and gender as depicted in the South. While work on current southern political figures and grassroots movements give insight into some of the defining characteristics of postsouthern rhetoric, past southern rhetorical

[19] Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 92-98.
[20] Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*.

voices left outside the canon can show us how current postsouthern rhetoric developed. Looking at the rhetoric of someone like Brown, who initially seems to defy traditional definitions of what it means to be "southern," aids the southern rhetorical scholar in reconceptualizing both the direction and recontextualization of southern rhetoric.

Charlotte Hawkins Brown's *Mammy* represents a literary history of southern African American ideology. The book works as a venue for constituting a southern white audience by utilizing white southern history and white southern identity. At the time the book was published, definitions and devices developed that would put the evolution of postsouthernness into place. Brown plays an interesting role in this process. Her book flirts with the idea of a southern identity for both blacks and whites and while that identity may have meant separate things to whites and blacks, she included both races in her vision of the South and its future. The following section addresses how Brown contributes to postsouthern concepts and how as a result, she contributes to the ideas of parody later instituted in southern literature and rhetoric.

Brown's function in the progression of postsouthern comes from her own marginal viewpoint of the South. Through this veiled view we see a South that comes into stark contrast with the romanticized view of the white South being developed in response to the loss of the Civil War and the need for re-defining southern identity. As several scholars point out, the South, meaning the white South, went through a time period of "making sense" of their defeat.[21] This redefining appears in everything from Confederate memorials in cemeteries and on courthouse lawns, to Confederate veterans celebrations, and the formation of organizations such as the United Daughters of the

[21] There are varying ideas as to the degree and purpose of this time in southern consciousness. See Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*; and Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*. For a more general look at this time period and its history see Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*.

Confederacy and the United Confederate Veterans.[22] Of course white southerners, taking advantage of their positions of authority, created these constructs and "southern" became synonymous with white.

While white southerners built political and cultural constructs to define southern to their advantage, as southerners they were still "other." This becomes boldly apparent in the writings of the Vanderbilt Agrarians as they struggle to combat Mencken's attacks on the South during the 1920s mentioned in chapter two. Brown plays into this threat by "shaming" the white southern women to whom she writes the novel while sending the novel to New England, where it was published in Boston, as an example of a "good deed" done in the South to better race relations. Not all Brown's northern white supporters were happy with the book. In fact, according to biographer Ceci Jenkins, northern reactions were mixed. Some felt the book may create divisiveness over the "North-versus-South wounds of slavery."[23] And yet, while Brown played to white southern women's sense of Old South paternalism, she also, ironically, played to northern whites' interest in the vocational training of young blacks for the development of an industrial workforce in which they could invest and benefit. As education historian Katherine Reynolds points out, Brown endured criticism for her accomodationist leanings but "accommodation is difficult to distinguish from manipulation."[24] These examples denote contrasts in Brown's appeal and in her obvious understanding of the various meanings of "South" dependent upon her audience. While white southerners still clung to ideals and

[22] For more information on the emergence of the various Confederate rituals see Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*.
[23] The information for this point is from an unpublished biography of Brown by Ceci Jenkins cited in at least two sources. See Sandra Smith and Earle West, "Charlotte Hawkins Brown," *Journal of Negro Education* 51 (1982): 191-206; and Denard, "Introduction," in *Mammy*, xxv.
[24] Katherine C. Reynolds, "Charlotte Hawkins Brown and the Palmer Institute," *Founding Mothers and Others: Women Educational Leaders During the Progressive Era*, ed. Alan R. Sadovnik and Susan E. Semel (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 10.

romance of the Old South narrative, white northerners literally bought into the narrative of New South prosperity. Brown uses both narratives to gain support for southern black education.

Those who criticized Brown, however, argued against her "manipulation" or "accommodation" of whites at the sacrifice of southern African American status. This need to accommodate and manipulate *is* Brown's marginal view of the South. In her South the position of African Americans can only be bettered by smooth use of identification within narratives already accepted by whites. Her South also includes the need to educate African American students through the very narrative that works to subordinate southern blacks by both the North and the South. Being a pragmatist, Brown believed education would eventually better the position of southern blacks, however accommodating her means may appear.

Brown understood in a pragmatic sense what southern literature later understands more broadly: the very idea of "South" is a constructed narrative dependent upon the views of those creating the narrative. There is no single South, but many. These many Souths eventually bring us to a point of postsouth, where definitions depend upon their contextual constraints. What the word "South" means may no longer be taken for granted, but instead comprehended in context or even turned upon itself for clarity. In southern literature this occurs in the form of parody.

7.4 *Mammy* as Parody

As noted, the evaluation of constitutive rhetoric found in *Mammy*, Brown's marginal status created a tightrope on which she walked while writing the story. The various purposes and collective subjects required masterful juggling. The book seems to

have succeeded on some level to increase funding for the school. Although Brown's critics attacked the seemingly accomodationist tactics she uses, little is known about the reaction to the book. Because there are no extant reviews of the book, finding a parodic understanding from those who were left out of the collective subject remains impossible.

This particular case then requires the critic to read *Mammy* as a parody. While we know of the book's success as an instigator to fundraising and we understand the constitutive rhetoric involved, the meaning found in the book by those not called forth as a collective subject remains unknown. Since little is available on that audience at the time of *Mammy's* publication, I suggest the parody comes from a critical reading of the story from a postsouthern stance.

The use of parody-like devices by African American authors is no more unusual than to find such devices in Euro-American authors. Critic Henry Louis Gates, Jr. mentions that *The Bondwoman's Narrative* by Hannah Crafts "is patterned after gothic and sentimental novels--especially Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*, Sir Walter Scott's *Rob Roy* and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*—as well as African American slave narratives."[25] Under Linda Hutcheon's definition of parody as "repetition with a difference" and "transcontextual" she provides a way of looking at these similarities to other works with the understanding that such similarities function as a way of communicating ideological arguments and borrowing authority.[26] Parody, however, requires more than similarity; it also necessitates irony and perhaps satire with the purpose of exposing ideology.

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[25] "Preface to the Trade Edition," in Hannah Crafts, *The Bondwoman's Narrative* (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 2002), xi.

[26] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 1985. Hutcheon explains that parody may be used to both change and ideological argument made by a work of art, or extend the argument by bringing forth that which may not be readily obvious.

The application of parody to Charlotte Hawkins Brown's *Mammy* brings to the surface several issues. First, while parody may seem a logical choice for marginal voices, it could well be a dangerous choice if the parody was interpreted to trivialize issues important to dominant culture. In such situations the parody may become less obvious and much more tragic than comedic. The second issue of concern lies in ways of knowing. As critic Patricia Yeager points out: "to know 'the' mind of the South is to know that there is an abyss between white and black ways of knowing, between two kinds of information about unequally shared southern worlds."[27] She further warns of the condescension often communicated by those white southerners who do think about the differences. These ways of knowing can make the interpretation process more difficult, especially when faced with a ninety year history gap. To combat both of these concerns, I offer this critique as a *starting point* for the need of a much broader and varied discussion on these and other topics associated with non-traditional views of the South.

As a parody, Mammy functions in several ways to achieve Brown's purpose of gaining both support for black domestic workers in the South and for garnering funds for her school. To discuss ways in which parody surfaces in *Mammy*, I will look at three different examples: Old South paternalism, the female white southerner, and the black southern Mammy.

In *"Mammy": An Appeal to the Heart of the South* Brown describes an Old South where slaves offered loyal support and slave owners appreciated and depended upon such faithfulness:

[27] Yeager, *Dirt and Desire*, 94.

> Aunt Susan had been the "Mammy" of the family for years before the war. She loved to recall the words of old Colonel Bretherton, who said to her as the last man of the family joined the Confederate army, to bind closer the chains that held her people: "Susan take care of my wife and children, and if I never come back, stay here; if they starve, starve with them . . . if they die, die with them."
>
> The old Colonel never returned, and though Aunt Susan heard the voice of freedom calling to her a few years afterwards, she had given her word to the Colonel and she kept it until the day of her death.[28]

In a turn of narrative, Brown ironically shifts the role of paternalism from that of the white slave owner to that of the slave. The Colonel shifts responsibility to Mammy for the welfare of his family. She takes care of their actual physical needs: "Three times a day for forty years as regular as a clock, dear Aunt Susan went back and forth to the 'white folks' house, and cooked the food that the Brethertons thrived on."[29] Instead of them taking care of her, she is now taking care of them. This care even involves the donation of one thousand dollars to the Brethertons in a time of need. Mammy received the money from an insurance settlement at the death of her own son.[30] In contrast to Mammy's unquestionable loyalty, the Colonel's request is to keep a white, patriarchal dominant order in place, regardless of the war's outcome. While Mammy has the responsibility to care for the family she has none of the paternal power that comes with authority.

The play on Old South paternalism and the ironic twists that Brown devises not only show the faithfulness of the slave/servant, but parodies the order of the ideal paternalistic structure. She turns the Old South hierarchy slightly on its head in order for Mammy to gain the moral high road that would later in the

[28] Brown, *Mammy*, 12.
[29] Ibid., 5
[30] Ibid., 21-22.

story bring a sense of "shame" to the audience. This is not to say Mammy has the same authority or privilege as her white counterparts, which would have defeated Brown's purpose of appealing to her 1919 female audience. Instead she slightly turns the hierarchy just enough to gain moral ground for the protagonist.

In her portrayal of the southern white woman, Brown parodies the relationship between females within the household. In the Bretherton house, Brown has stressed the relationship between Mammy and the grandmother and Edith as "part of the family." Throughout the story familiar names are used. Mammy is also known as "Aunt Susan." She talks of nursing Edith at her bosom like she was her own child. And Edith's grandmother "loves Mammy as a sister."[31] Mammy struggles to the big house in the snow storm that would eventually kill her because "'Mammy's child leave's dis morning, and ain't nary beaten biscuit dere to put in her lunch.'"[32] The romanticized illustration seems a far stretch from the historical studies on slave owner females and slaves of plantation homes.

In fact what the histories reveal is a complicated social structure of hierarchies of race, class, and gender that caused resentment, pain, and oppression. Historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese describes these relationships as highly tense. She claims the southern lady at times is categorized as a type of closet feminist, enduring the betrayal of husbands with slaves and the burden of running a household, "but most ladies . . . were hardly prepared to do without slaves and enthusiastically supported secession. Above all they did not advance

[31] Ibid., 22.
[32] Ibid., 23.

an alternate model of womanhood." In contrast, the slave women "did not see their mistresses as oppressed sisters."[33] Charlotte Hawkins Brown's own family endured the ramifications of the Old South slave society. Her fair skinned, blue-eyed grandmother was the African American sister of her white master."[34] Brown understood that reality and fiction are two different things.

Brown parodies the southern lady/southern slave relationship by showing what she knew her white female audience wanted to see. Yet she alters it just enough to provide the "shaming" element necessary to change behavior and increase fund raising. The familiar naming of characters and romanticized relationships were fictionalized parodies of the realistic relationships in the South. One wonders if Brown ever recognized the parodies and paradoxes associated with these romantic visions and idealized views. The disconnection between what whites idealized and Brown experienced surely must have caused the author to wince on occasion.

The final parody exists in the characterization of Mammy. Her loyalty, self-sacrifice, and faithful service are inarguably saintly. Her mantra "Until I die" resounds throughout the book. Mammy never seems to resent her treatment. She is not the person who complains of her living situation; instead, Edith observes and complains for her. And while power hierarchies and societal confines may have deterred complaints of black domestic help to their white employers, such characteristics could not have prevented resentment and bitterness at such treatment.

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[33] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 47-48.
[34] Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 179.

Mammy is parodied and romanticized to actually fit the white ideal. Brown's white southern audience wanted to believe their domestic help actually served them with a generous spirit. To have communicated Mammy's discontent would have suggested ungratefulness. Brown places Mammy within the white ideal framework, but alters, or parodies the situation just enough to give Mammy the moral high ground over her white female counterparts.

These three parodies within Brown's book illustrate both the complexity and subtlety of marginal narrative. Brown's repetition of southern characteristics and people with a difference in slight alterations creates a sense of irony suited to parodies.

Charlotte Hawkins Brown commands attention for her masterful use of constitutive rhetoric, her contributions to the concept of postsouthern, and her subtle use of parody as a marginal voice. All of these rhetorical devices differ slightly when utilized within a 1919 framework by a southern African American woman communicating to a privileged female audience. Brown demonstrates the use of constitutive rhetoric through the ideological effects of developing a collective subject, creating a transhistorical narrative, and giving the illusion of a choice. Because of her marginal view as well as her minority protagonist, Mammy, Brown's use of a collective subject is altered by being separate from the protagonist in the novella. The transhistorical narrative indicates the use of a romanticized white vision of the Old South, instead of one the protagonists and Brown may actually experience. The author gains the illusion of choice by giving her marginalized character the moral high ground by "shaming" the audience to

which she constitutes. These elements show that while constitutive rhetoric may work when a marginal speaker calls forth a marginal audience, they must be altered when the speaker is marginal and the audience privileged.

When analyzing *Mammy* from a twenty-first century perspective the critic becomes the one left out of Brown's collective subject, causing a rather postsouthern parody from this view. With historical knowledge as well as the historical layerings of 2004, the novella contains different meaning than intended for the 1919 audience.

A critical analysis also finds parody through Brown's marginal view. As the author with a purpose of persuading a white female audience, Brown played to that audience even though she did not share their vision. As a result her romanticized Old South values, the relationships between white and black women, and the construct of the Mammy all strike parodied meaning when analyzed from Brown's own experiences.

Through this analysis we see the difficulty of including those traditionally not considered "southerners" into a construct with particular ideological privileges for those on the "inside" of the construct. The meanings and suggestions of cultural symbols become even more ambiguous when shifting meaning between those inside a subject and those outside a subject. The case of *Mammy* brings forth issues of southern identity and the definitions traditionally supported by rhetorical scholars. Although traditional definitions may be re-conceptualized, the use of one definition for the description of one South will

never capture the diversity in culture and attitudes within the South. Brown's book is a rhetorical testimony to the need for other southern rhetorics.

Chapter 8.

Conclusion: Southern Public Address is American Public Address

> The South is America. The South is what we started out with in this bizarre, slightly troubling, basically wonderful country – fun, danger, friendliness, energy, enthusiasm, and brave, crazy, tough people.
>
> PJ O'Rourke

As I work to bring this project to a close the South has once again gained the attention and imagination of a national audience. Unfortunately, like past historical occasions this too is a moment of destruction, death, and personal loss. Just weeks earlier hurricane Katrina demolished sections of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. The media captured issues of racial inequality, poverty, and tensions between state and federal governments. Slowly, like so many other times before, narratives begin to surface through the physical destruction of religious faith, communal aid, and self-sacrifice. As time goes on, perhaps some element to the discourse surrounding this disaster will be labeled "southern." At this point, however, the most moving revelations show the human emotion felt around the world. Those at risk and suffering in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana are not only southerners, they are Americans, and they are human.

Like the people of the South, their rhetoric is not just southern but also human. A southern rhetorical study remains the study of human culture featuring a rich tapestry of issues on race, class and gender that deserve reflection and attention. This dissertation examines the way in which rhetorical scholars label southern public address and discourse as less important or less interesting than other areas of rhetorical scholarship. Due to the ideological connections of southern identity with white patriarchal culture, southern rhetoric has been left outside much of the scholarly debate it deserves. Yet

southern rhetoric is not just southern, it is human rhetoric. Understanding more about the South gives insight not merely into a geographic region but into human communication.

For far too long the assumption by many has been that the South has already been analyzed, theorized, and debated, that there remains nothing left to say on the subject. Hopefully this dissertation reveals many other things worthy of analysis, for while the South continually changes, it reopens doors on issues such as race, class, and gender previously thought closed. Again, these are not just southern issues, they are human issues. Through the offered meta-critical analysis and the postsouthern case studies I reopen some of these doors for further speculation and analysis. This chapter serves to summarize the discussion, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of both method and case studies and finally suggest further research on this topic.

8.1 Summary

The purpose of this dissertation is two-fold, to analyze through a meta-critical approach the development of southern rhetoric, specifically pinpointing scholars making the greatest impact on the area, and to re-conceptualize southern rhetoric for accessibility and analysis that fit contemporary postsouth times. Several research questions motivated this study: 1) What is southern rhetoric? 2) In what ways was southern public address affected by missing the renaissance? And 3) how does the history of southern identity affect southern rhetorical scholarship?

Much concern arose from these questions over definitions of “southern” and its rather dated and political usage. The literature in the field appears inconsistent when speaking of how to categorize southern public address. Some confusion also exists in the definitions associated with southern rhetoric that originated in the fields of English and

history. To define southern rhetoric in terms more appropriate to the study of communication, early southern rhetorical scholars faced two dilemmas: 1) finding a definition that could encompass the vast meaning of "southern" and "south," and 2) getting rid of myths associated with the definitions found in English and history. These two problems greatly affected how and for what purpose southern rhetoric was defined and preserved. One of the central problems to come out of defining southern rhetoric remains the ever-changing, fluid nature of the South, a problem I suggest handling by recognizing the South as a postsouth – a term allowing contextual definitions due to the need for flexibility depending on the rhetorical situation. Postsouth recognizes the historical layering that occurs in southern rhetorical narrative and acknowledges a variety of meanings linked to the South and to those speaking from a southern viewpoint.

I offer the missing of the public address renaissance as one reason southern rhetoric suffers in its current status. The shift in focus away from neo-Aristotelian method never quite reached southern rhetoric. Consequently, the area missed the opportunity to apply multiple methods that help gain deeper insight into the variety of voices and cultures influencing the South. The southern public address canon illustrates another effect connected to the missed renaissance. Voices representing the minorities and ethnicities making up the South remain neglected from the traditional white, male, Protestant southerner. Pushing southern public address into a "renaissance" requires dealing with many of these issues of canon and method.

The question of how the history of southern identity affected southern rhetoric contributes to this discussion as well. Little research exists on the connection between southern identity and southern rhetoric. Scholars seem to accept ideas of southern

rhetoric and its formation with little regard for the political and societal motivations behind its development. Throughout my meta-critical analysis the topic motivated much of the investigation.

The first half of the dissertation focuses on the genealogy and definitions of southern rhetoric and how those definitions relate to southern rhetorical scholarship and more broadly to southern identity. Chapter Two primarily targets two basic historical aspects of southern rhetorical studies. The first discusses the derivative connection speech communication shares with English. Understanding how speech developed from English aids in comprehending the associations between southern literature and southern rhetoric. Along this vein I shift concentration to the more specific influence out of southern literature, that of the Southern Agrarians and their subsequent effect on definitions framing southern culture and identity. The Southern Agrarians, motivated by H.L. Mencken and the progressive push for industry, worked to configure southern culture for their own purposes. Several key aspects of Southern Agrarian thought impacted later developments in southern rhetorical scholarship. Of particular importance to southern rhetorical studies is the Agrarians' defensive position that countered Mencken's view of the South as a second rate "other." They wrote their work *I'll Take My Stand* as an intervention motivated by political ideology. In their book the Twelve turned to aspects of the Old South as a standard for southern culture and daily living. Using the Old South standards of agrarianism, paternalism, patriarchy, and white privilege the Southern Agrarians worked to mold and preserve a South that reflected their own elitist views.

Other aspects of the Southern Agrarian philosophy affected the development of southern literature and also southern public address studies. Allen Tate's acknowledgment of "historical consciousness" or the idea of "the past in the present" greatly impacted the Agrarian view of southern culture. Through the idea of historical consciousness the Agrarians recognized a layering of meaning from both the past and the present imposed upon southern culture. John Crowe Ransom, as well as other Agrarians, communicated much of their attitudes toward the South through myth. Myth served as a language for the Agrarians, many of whom were poets. It provided them with a contrasting way to talk about the South in place of the scientific logic and reasoning they so abhorred. Myth, linked to the spiritual nature of humans, afforded the Agrarians a type of elitist artistic license in which historical consciousness, white patriarchy, and paternalism could be institutionalized.

Following in the Agrarians' footsteps Richard Weaver creates a bridge between southern literature and southern rhetorical studies. Weaver understands the importance of defining a term to claim ownership of an argument. Furthermore, he accepts the view of southern culture from the Agrarians and expands upon it by offering the addition of political conservatism and Platonic idealism. Weaver's philosophy and politics culminated in southern values as depicted by the Agrarians. The South symbolized the ideal rooted in myth. Weaver makes three major contributions to southern rhetorical studies, which greatly affect the consequent direction of the area: 1) a conservative and rigid canon, 2) a defensive voice bound to the burden of southern history, and 3) analysis tied and rooted in myth. Variants of these three contributions continue to influence current scholarship.

Southern oratorical research owes much of its beginning to Dallas Dickey. Dickey's most significant contribution stemmed from his desire to preserve southern public address as southern. Taking cues from the Southern Agrarians' and Richard Weaver's definition of southern, Dickey worked to recognize southern public address from a white, male, Protestant view. Dickey concentrated on the need for anthologizing the rhetoric of politicians, preachers, historical figures, and statesmen, thus creating a patriarchal white canon. His call for viewing southern public address as a legitimate area of study marked a major moment in the development of the area – southern oratory was officially acknowledged as such in print by a rhetorical scholar. Accompanying his call for research in southern oratory, Dickey also worked to debunk some of the stereotypes the field of history associated with southern rhetoric. Dickey's rebuttal of southern orators as "ephemeral and florid" was the first study of its kind. Thus with Dallas Dickey began an acknowledged desire to research the area of southern public address.

In contrast to Dickey, Waldo Braden's concerns dealt more with the quality of southern rhetorical scholarship than with the southern public address canon. He spent much time and effort confronting poor rhetorical analysis that led to stereotype and myth creation. Braden fought misguided stereotypes with the analysis of myth, working to explain and investigate the unfounded arguments of others. Like the Agrarians and Weaver, Braden used a defensive tone in his scholarship, but unlike them he did not defend the South but instead defended southern public address. As a result of Braden's work he inadvertently solidified the predominately white, patriarchal, southern public address canon. His work consistently reevaluated those already a part of the canon, and while his research did gain insight into the problematic development of the canon, it did

little to change the course of the structure. While Braden sliced away at the misrepresentations from other disciplines, his work on southern myth and the myths of southern oratory remain a constant foundation in southern public address scholarship.

Facing an acute "anxiety of influence," the next generation in the genealogy of southern public address never quite moves the area into a renaissance. This generation suffers from three problems that represent their anxiety as well as problems in southern rhetoric scholarship: 1) a reliance on traditional methods of analysis, 2) uninterrogated residuals representing past ideologies within the canon, and 3) an overall defensiveness with respect to the South's history and culture. Stuart Towns and Stephen Smith both make significant additions to southern public address scholarship. Towns' contribution to the southern public address canon as well as a conscious effort to discuss similarities of civil rights rhetoric and southern rhetoric gain closer movement toward a renaissance. Smith too adds to the scholarship through his discussion on southern myth. His work on the transformation and evolution of southern myths within southern culture asks important questions, yet never quite gets at the substantive problems with these myths – their ideological purpose and impact. Towns, like Dickey, comes from the southern preservationist tradition while Smith falls under the direct influence of southern myth Braden questioned. Both scholars give worthy additional research. Their anxiety of influence keeps them tied to definitions and perceptions of southern culture and identity still exclusive of key groups and individuals.

From the Vanderbilt Agrarians to Richard Weaver, Dallas Dickey, and Waldo Braden and even further to the work of Stuart Towns and Stephen Smith, the southern rhetorical scholarly tradition suffers from several key deficiencies: 1) limited definitions

of “southern” meant to support an Agrarian agenda, 2) a limited theoretical focus that favors an ideological position, 3) an unrepresentative canon, and 4) a defensive tone focused on both southern history and southern culture. The problems linked with these characteristics necessitate re-conceptualizing southern rhetoric and, therefore, the direction of its scholarship.

To at least begin the discussion on how to combat the problems facing southern rhetorical scholarship and the southern public address canon, I propose looking at southern rhetoric as postsouthern, through the lens of constitutive rhetoric analysis and parody theory. By applying these principles we may address several of the previously mentioned problems facing southern rhetoric.

By framing southern rhetoric in the postsouthern, scholars gain the ability to define “southern” and “South” in terms of context. Scholars obtain flexibility through the postsouth because it assumes a historical layering of meaning already exists. The postsouth resulted from this very historical layering maintained through years of historical consciousness and symbolic use and reuse. The postsouth encourages an analysis of these layerings specifically for the purpose of understanding the ideologies and political ramifications associated with each. Analyzing the postsouth through the theories of constitutive rhetoric, as developed by Maurice Charland, and parody, as theorized by Linda Hutcheon, provide several advantages. First, these theories allow for variety within southern public address analysis without dismissing traditional methods. The use of parody still requires an understanding of context associated with a rhetorical event and the application of constitutive rhetoric involves a comprehension of identity and its relationship to rhetoric. Both context and identity represent concerns from

traditional models of rhetoric. Furthermore, these methods and their postsouthern frame allow for an explosion of the southern public address canon. Definitions of "southern" and the resulting representations can no longer be taken for granted. And finally, this analysis replaces the defensive tone found in the works of the mentioned scholars who suffered both from an anxiety of influence and a burden of southern history. These methods call for more varied viewpoints – including those both "inside" and "outside" the identification of southern. Constitutive rhetorical analysis helps to identify how the audience was constructed and "called forth" by the speaker, while parody aids in analyzing how those not "called forth," or not identifying with the message, respond and make meaning of the rhetorical situation. In this way then, I work to utilize more variety in the viewpoint of speakers and audiences than previously evaluated. These advantages may not solve all the problems associated with southern rhetoric, but they do bring the problems to the surface and approach solutions that may spur further development.

To demonstrate the use of constitutive rhetoric, parody, and the postsouth, I offer three case studies with varying attributes and circumstances: 1) the League of the South, a grassroots organization committed to the creation of a southern republic, 2) Senator Zell Miller and his 2004 Republican National Convention Speech, a southern politician addressing a national audience and 3) Charlotte Hawkins Brown and her book *"Mammy:" An Appeal to the Heart of the South*, an African American southerner speaking to a 1919 white audience.

The League of the South appears in this study due to their specific southern motives. As a group working for state sovereignty and the formation of a southern republic, they provide a unique viewpoint rooted in a particular southern culture. The

application of their rhetoric to Charland's constitutive rhetoric reveals several characteristic of the LoS's rhetoric. First, as the League works to call forth an audience they do so using the term southerner, but referring to a particular type of southerner. Due to their specific motives, the League hopes southerners will see themselves as individuals with a clear identification with a group. This group identification requires three variables: 1) a separation from the identity of American, 2) a superseding of southern identity over that of American, and 3) an identity toward a southern marginal status. Once the audience accepts and identifies with these variables, the League revises the southern historical narrative in order to achieve the appearance that their type of southerner is consistent with southerners throughout history. Finally, the League gives the illusion that those in their audience who are now a part of the narrative are free to make a choice about the actions they will now take. Of course, as with all constitutive rhetorics, the audience must make the choice consistent with the League's narrative in order to remain identified as a League southerner.

After the events of September 11, 2001, League membership decreased and the League struggled with southern identification problems. The terrorist attacks unified the United States making the identity of being southern less important instead of the most important part of one's identity. Postsouth and parody provide ways of understanding how this identification problem occurred. While some people may consider themselves southerners, they may not identify with the League's particular type of southerness; instead they see the League as a parody. The League consciously plays on historical symbolism and layering meant to drive at the emotions of their audience; however, in the process the symbols and references are transcontextualized. The meaning of the symbol

is altered and possibly exaggerated and ineffective in a twenty-first century where "southerner" means many different things. This illustrates the postsouthern quality of League rhetoric. Indeed, the League of the South's complex juggling of southern associations is confused by the multiplicity of contexts of a postsouth South.

Another case of postsouthern rhetoric took place at the 2004 Republican National Convention. Former Georgia Democratic Senator Zell Miller gave the keynote address in favor of the Republican Presidential candidate, George W. Bush. Historically Miller's speech was exceptional due to its implications. Never before had a member of an opposing party given a keynote at a national convention in favor of the presidential candidate. Furthermore, Miller's speech resonates with past speeches of southern demagogues in a uniquely postsouth way. In viewing the constitutive rhetoric of Miller's speech he shows evidence of the ideological effects linked to constitutive rhetoric. Miller identifies a collective subject – conservative Democrats. He narrates a history creating a transhistorical subject, and he provides the illusion of choice for his subject. However, the postsouthern characteristics of Miller's speech associate him with southern demagogues. His use of one-sided arguments, scapegoating, and exploiting the fears of the masses parody southern demagogues rooted in the past. His demagoguery combined with his angry delivery caused many of those outside his collective subject to view Miller as a parody of demagogues of the past such as Lester Maddox and George Wallace. Miller's rhetoric is an excellent example of how a speaker traditionally considered a southern orator uses "southern appeals" to a national audience. However, his maneuvering of his postsouth audience makes him important as a contemporary speaker.

The example of Charlotte Hawkins Brown is complex and different from those mentioned previously. Her work is literary discourse rather than oral, and instead of a contemporary audience she speaks to a 1919 southern female audience; she must approach her constitutive rhetoric as a minority with a marginalized view. In looking at all these three aspects of her rhetoric, the postsouthern view comes from the critic as opposed to an audience on the outside of Brown's collective subject.

Brown's limited authority as a southern African American woman in 1919 North Carolina creates a problem in the calling forth of her collective subject. Brown is speaking to white southern women whom she appeals to through the use of a mammy in her novella. According to Charland, typically the collective subject identifies with a protagonist of a rhetorical narrative; in this case, however, Brown uses her white female characters to help the white audience gain empathy for Mammy. Brown also utilizes racism and paternalism against the white audience as a way to associate with the white romanticism of the Old South and gain the agreement of the white audience with Brown's goal, that of interracial cooperation.

From a postsouthern critic's view of the novella Brown's marginal view seems to parody the Old South, the relationships between mistresses and their female slaves, and even the idea of a mammy. Bit by bit Brown seems to knowingly parody what whites want to believe with what the lived reality actually tends to be. Viewing the book from the postsouthern parody allows the critic insight into the symbolic layering associated with the story not necessarily obvious in a 1919 South. Brown herself represents the outsider here; her view of the South and the parody of the paternalized, white, Old South hierarchy grant a small window into her marginalized view.

8.2 Ramifications of Research

From the research undertaken through the course of this project, I became acutely aware of the narrative I created while looking for answers. Much of this narrative develops in the meta-critical analysis during the first part of this chapter. Therefore, understanding the role this project plays within that narrative reveals several of my own defenses and "anxieties of influence."

8.2.1 Defensive Tone and Parody

The meta-critical analysis revealed a defensive tone throughout much of the rhetorical scholarship in southern public address. The analysis of the Agrarians and Richard Weaver reflected a clearly developed defense of southern culture, while those specifically researching public address defended southern history, southern culture, and southern public address itself. The Southern Agrarians and Weaver seem persistent in their defense of southern culture as something worthwhile and ideal. Because of this defensiveness and the fact that southern culture was being attacked during the time of their writings, both the Southern Agrarians and Richard Weaver write with an historical consciousness full of burden. Variants of this defensive tone continue in the works of Dallas Dickey, Waldo Braden, Stuart Towns, and Stephen Smith.

This project too defends a particular burden, that of opening the canon for the inclusion of other southerners. Unlike my predecessors, I am not interested in defending a traditional view, nor am I concerned about defending southern history against past mistakes made throughout that history. I am defending those left out of the southern rhetorical tradition. Due to this stance, I feel a bit like the "madwoman in the attic,"

working against a male-defined South while struggling to find a southern identity with enough room to include those who deserve acceptance.

My connection to what Gilbert and Gubar coined *The Madwoman in the Attic* comes from the dilemma of taking a mostly male-defined structure, such as southern rhetoric, and trying to work within those limitations while also struggling to change them.[1] Gilbert and Gubar wrote *The Madwoman in the Attic* in response to Harold Bloom's "Anxieties of Influence."[2] Seeing Bloom's explanation to literary and critical creation, Gilbert and Gubar claimed Bloom's model was chauvinistic and overly aggressive. Their response tried to create an alternative explanation for women. The result, while interesting, was problematic and displaced during third wave feminist theory.

In some ways, what I propose is a type of second wave southernism, attempting to keep what can be salvaged of traditional theory and culture while recognizing the value and worth of postmodern analysis and alternative South's. Due to this viewpoint I find myself at times on the outside, having to parody what was done in the past in order to make sense of my own understandings.

In a sense this project is a postsouth parody. Each generation in the genealogy adds to the postsouthern nature of southern rhetorical studies as they slightly alter the definitions and perceptions of southern, despite persistent connections to the Agrarians and Weaver. The past research and this project's position in that research reveal one of postsouthern parody. The only way this critic could appropriate her own view as part of the genealogy was to create criticisms and definitions that show a transcontextualization

[1] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970)
[2] Harold Bloom, *Anxieties of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

and “repetition with a difference.” Therefore, Chapter Six and the critique of Senator Zell Miller provides an example similar to one that might appear in the traditional canon of southern rhetorical studies, yet the national audience, the subtle addressing of “southerners” throughout the nation and Miller’s parody of the southern demagogue all point to a “difference” in this repetition.

8.2.2 Political Leaning and Anxiety of Influence:

The meta-critical genealogy also revealed the political motives of the Agrarians and how those motives continued to contemporary times. The fact that the Southern Agrarians constructed southern culture, and thus southern rhetoric, with a political ideology in mind is not surprising. What remains pertinent, however, is how those ideas were reconstructed and reused to current day. This question gets at the heart of what rhetorical analysis means to people’s day to day life. While this dissertation tends to deal more with the former than the latter, I do think the recent events in New Orleans and Mississippi help us recognize that issues of privilege in the South remain problematic. When issues of privilege affect access to rhetoric, information and inclusion, people’s lives are affected. The analysis of political ideology within rhetorical constructs helps us understand who is and is not included, whether through intellectual scholarship or public discourse. The issues of inclusion and exclusion have very real consequences and are always political in nature. This project advocates more inclusion: the inclusion of more southern public address scholarship in the renaissance, the inclusion of more varied views of southern, the inclusion of more varied southerners, and the inclusion of southern public address as contemporary. These changes will indeed change the shape of southern public address as well as its scholarship.

I too write with a political viewpoint on the world that I construct for particular purposes. Like my contemporaries I too suffer from an "anxiety of influence" that greatly affects my work. Similar to Dallas Dickey I want to make a call that southern rhetoric not be dismissed, that it be not only re-evaluated but preserved. Where I differ from Dickey appears in my criteria for both evaluation and preservation—criteria discussed in this project. Much like Waldo Braden I am defensive about the quality of southern public address scholarship. In this project I review much of what others earlier say in their scholarship and I look for ways in which perception affected their choices. Unfortunately, like Braden, my scholarship here – particularly my case studies—does not reflect the canon I believe possible for southern public address. While chapter seven on Charlotte Hawkins Brown questions traditional definitions of "southern orator," the League of the South and Zell Miller could be argued to reinforce the tradition. I argue that these cases illustrate new aspects of both South and postsouth. However, their appearance here goes to prove just how much work remains in southern rhetoric overall. Like Towns and Smith there are times I utilize methods from the past, such as southern demagogues, and I search for new ways of looking at the southern past. Yet I differ in who I observe and why. I am not interested in defending southern history, southern culture, or southern identity. Instead I search for how those things southern work and for whom they work and why. My anxieties of influence are those from a long tradition of southern rhetorical scholarship, yet within those anxieties exist differences – perhaps parodies – and through those differences new southern scholarship emerges.

8.2.3 The New Concept of Southern Rhetoric

When Dallas Dickey made a call to study southern oratory over sixty years ago, he outlined some possible sources for that research. Mentioning preachers, politicians, statesmen, and other prominent leaders, Dickey carved out a southern oratory for his time. I would like to take this opportunity to add to Dickey's call. In doing so I am sure to leave out areas or people that may be very interesting to investigate as a southerner and a speaker. This should only be considered a regrettable lack of knowledge on my part and not any indication that they should not be analyzed and considered. Three areas that definitely need more analysis and development are the categories of race, class, and gender.

For the discussion of gender, the first area I wish to see unearthed is that of women's historical speeches. This is a difficult area in which to work, because so many of these speeches were not preserved at the time or are archived without notice. The fact that many women were forced to write in diaries or letters as a way of expression instead of public speaking forces us to stretch the canon from one of "public speaking" to rhetoric, or even discourse. To find women speakers requires digging into the lives and speeches of women who spoke at the Anti-Lynching conference in 1919, as Charlotte Hawkins Brown did, or the Anti-Suffrage and Suffrage speeches of southern women, or any number of personal archives. There were several female-run educational groups in the South by both blacks and whites that sponsored conferences where public address took place. The written and spoken public discourse of wives of statesmen and politicians deserves attention as well. These examples, as well as others, are a sample of future directions possible for southern rhetorical studies.

Along the lines of gender issues, class status remains a prominent characteristic of southern culture and identity. Further research on less privileged groups may provide more insight into this issue so prevalent in southern society. Grassroots organizations, no matter how seemingly insignificant, do give insight into the workings of those with fewer resources to be heard. These groups are sometimes small and hard to find, but may prove helpful in looking at southern identity. Continued research into various southern heritage groups, regionalists' organizations, independent publications-- such as newspapers-- and institutes designed to preserve southern culture are just a few of the options. In re-conceptualizing southern rhetoric, I wish to open doors to analyze even those difficult to find in archives and documents by traditional methods. To find and analyze such cases is not easy, or even possible in some cases, yet in this way those who may have a very small voice can be given a larger one.

Gender and class cannot be discussed in the South without bringing up the issue of race. Racial constructs in the South have long been a part of its history and identity. When people think of southern history and the issue of slavery, relations between white and black southerners come to mind. The current racial mix of the South is very different today than it was during the Civil Rights Movement. All kinds of races and ethnicities make up the southern geographic that were much smaller forty or fifty years ago. Due to this change, the racial issues associated with the South are no longer just black and white issues. The rhetorical critiques of southern rhetoric need to consider these changes and their significance. The change in demographics definitely speaks to the need for postsouth analysis. The effect of diversity on southern speakers is worthy of research. The way southern states talk about race may have changed greatly since 1964. Therefore,

further investigations into current discussions on race and the effects of these discussions are needed.

Other than looking into issues of race, class, and gender, southern rhetorical studies gives us the opportunity to bridge areas of theoretical importance in a way public address never did. Much of the topics associated with southern rhetoric are "conservative" in nature. The political leanings of southerners as well as various aspects of some southern culture have conservative philosophical roots. To analyze public address as cultural phenomena requires some knowledge and use of critical rhetoric. These characteristics allow for southern public address to work as a bridge between traditional approaches meant to capture elements of conservative thought and more critical approaches that capitalize on the cultural analysis. I propose an area of study large enough for both areas of the discipline.

For any of these new concepts to take place necessitates a change in attitude of those within the discipline toward southern public address. Instead of taking an elitist attitude against southern culture and public address, a more serious demeanor toward the topic is advantageous to its success. Panels at NCA on southern culture sometimes fall to elitist tendencies by joking and making fun of those cultures instead of recognizing their own part in the cultural drama. The South cannot exist as "the South" without the voluntary participation of those who look for the very stereotypes and myths to label people and events in those categories. For example "good ole girls" and "redneck boys" are out there in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Yet so are university professors and museum curators. The South partially exists as such because people look for it to be so. Much like Mencken, outsiders turn the South into a romanticized, stereotyped, mythical

place. They come to the South looking for "the South" and of course they find it. A more tolerant and varied canon will question some of these stereotypes and assumptions about southerners, southern culture, and southern public address.

8.3 Future Research

The need for further research in the direction of this project as well as others is vast. The re-conceptualization of southern rhetoric deserves the analysis of more case studies both in and out of the current canon. While moving into a renaissance requires much needed analysis, the work of unearthing historical texts is one not to be ignored. There still remains a great need for the analysis of those speakers whose discourse challenges traditional views of "southern." The analysis of African American southern women is an area continually ignored by southern rhetorical scholarship. This group's exclusion necessitates much more research and analysis on their obvious rhetorical value to the canon. The inclusion of southern white women also remains a much needed area of analysis. This group too suffers from a lack of early text preservation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as analysis. African American southern males also deserve a much needed re-evaluation as southern rhetors. Studies observing the similarities and differences in African American and southern rhetoric potentially offer much to this area of research.

Of course to further move in the direction of a "southern public address renaissance" demands the use of varied and contemporary theoretical frameworks. Such analysis allows the southern rhetorical scholar to indeed see what still needs to be seen, or make the invisible visible. This project offers one such addition, however, many more options await use.

There remains much work to continue in the area of southern and postsouthern rhetoric. Opening the doors for more varied and representative research is only the first in several steps which must be taken to offer southern rhetorical studies many of the same lessons found in other areas of the field. Only then may southern scholars in other fields, such as history and English truly benefit from our research as much as we have benefited from theirs.

The damage from hurricanes that recently pounded the South reminded this country that the South has its problems, poverty, lawlessness, racism, and government incompetence. The pictures of these inadequacies were extremely clear. But Americans also realized, like they did during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's time, that the South is not just a "southern problem." It is a problem to which the whole country must respond. Southern public address studies is not just a "southern problem" either. The lack of attention to this area is an inadequate response on the shoulders of the entire discipline. Problems of southern public address are problems of American public address and human communication at large. Only by viewing it as such, will things ever change.

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